



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
October 9 – 16, 2015

Table of Contents

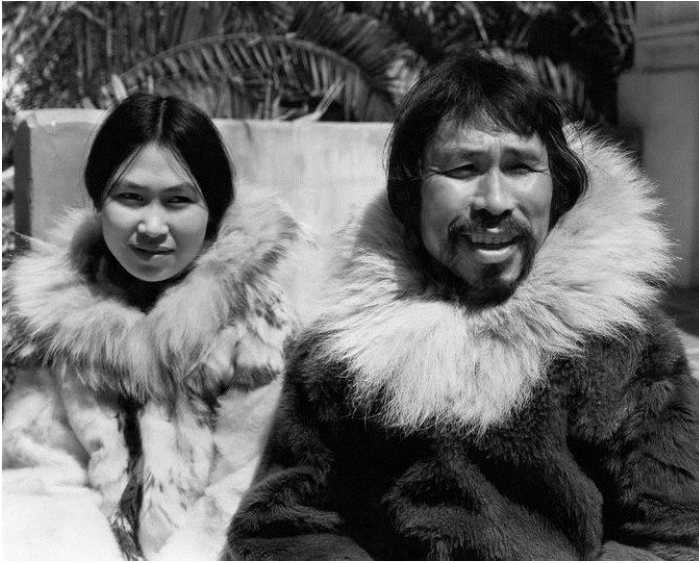
The following news stories are divided into the following sections.

Aboriginal Arts & Culture	2
Aboriginal Business & Finance	15
Aboriginal Community Development	18
Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement	35
Aboriginal Education & Youth	52
Aboriginal Health	74
Aboriginal History & Heritage	77
Aboriginal Identity & Representation	80
Aboriginal Inequality & Poverty	84
Aboriginal Politics	87
Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources	140
Land Claims & Treaty Rights	146
Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women	167
Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations	187

Aboriginal Arts & Culture

Fictitious Tales, Actual Odysseys

By J. HOBERMANOCT. 9, 2015



Two unidentified actors in W.S. Van Dyke's "Eskimo" (1933). Credit Warner Bros. Home Entertainment

Documentary fictions are sometimes characterized as “hybrids.” The term is often applied to independent or experimental work, but few movies deserve it more than MGM's “Eskimo,” from 1933 (available on DVD from Warner Archive).

Shot in northern Alaska with a largely Inuit — and Inuit-speaking — cast, “Eskimo” was one of four racially charged ethnographic romances made on location during the late silent and early sound period by W. S. Van Dyke (1889-1943). The son of a California judge and a concert pianist turned actress, Van Dyke made his stage debut at 3, broke into movies as an assistant director for D. W. Griffith and, directing nearly 30 features between 1930 and 1940, would be MGM's most reliable workhorse, affectionately nicknamed “One-Shot Woody.”

Van Dyke was assigned to work with and wound up displacing the pioneering documentarian Robert Flaherty on the 1928 Tahiti-set adventure “White Shadows in the South Seas” (previously reissued by Warner Archive). He followed up with a second Tahitian romance, “The Pagan” (1929), a vehicle for Ramon Novarro, and then MGM's most elaborate location-adventure to date, “Trader Horn” (1931). Shot over seven months in four central African colonies, the movie required what has been described as the largest safari on record (some 35 travelers and almost 200 indigenous people, and 90 tons of equipment) and copious infusions of alcohol. One crew member was eaten by a crocodile and another trampled by a rhino.



Harry Carey, Duncan Renaldo and Edwina Booth in W.S. Van Dyke's "Trader Horn" (1931). Credit Warner Bros. Home Entertainment

After four back-lot productions, including "Tarzan the Ape Man" (1932), Van Dyke returned to the field with "Eskimo." It's a movie that marks the end of a period when, as Kevin Brownlow wrote in "The War, the West, and the Wilderness," his history of silent-era dramatic travelogues, "vast expeditions from Hollywood set out like conquistadors for distant lands."

Among other things, "Eskimo" (filmed in a location that Van Dyke found even more rugged than equatorial Africa) documents spear fishing and walrus hunting, a caribou stampede into the sea, stunt kayaking and celebratory dances to enliven the brutal tale of the great hunter Mala, who loses his wife to a lecherous sea captain. (The charismatic Mala was played by Ray Wise — credited as Ray Mala — the child of an Inuit mother and a Russian Jewish father, and himself a Hollywood camera operator.)

"Eskimo" predates the strict Hollywood Production Code, and nearly as impressive as the use of Inuit dialogue (translated in flowery English intertitles) is the movie's frankly sensationalist eschewing of Christian morality. Advertised as a "Weird Tale of the Arctic," "Eskimo" showed the Inuit as polygamous and even polyandrous, as when several married women offer sexual comfort to the bereaved Mala. The whites, by contrast, are exploitative and cruel, raping and killing Mala's wife (whose death seems to be of no consequence) and later persecuting him after he takes revenge.

While "Eskimo" makes some attempt to respect another culture, the same cannot be said for "Trader Horn" (also newly available in DVD from Warner Archive). This unsavory circus of racialized sadism exploits Africa as a special effect with travelogue footage of bare-breasted women, fierce-looking pygmies, and masses of crocodiles, but it was only partly filmed there. The more vicious animal fights were shot in Mexico, while virtually all of the dialogue scenes were staged on the MGM lot: "The hippos are getting pretty thick," the title character (Harry Carey) explains in one cutaway shot.

Although overwhelmed by Van Dyke's hours of documentary footage, the studio eventually fashioned a suitably lurid narrative in which Trader Horn and his young sidekick (Duncan Renaldo, a Romanian-born actor who would later play the Cisco Kid

on television) search the jungle for a missionary's daughter captured by cannibals and raised to be the tribe's irascible "white goddess" (Edwina Booth).

Supposedly cast for her blond tresses and fiery temper, Booth runs around half-naked for most of the movie. Accounts vary as to whether she picked up a tropical disease in Africa or had a nervous breakdown upon her return, but in any case she sued MGM for damages, and her career never recovered from her appearance in what was the studio's most profitable film of 1931. Van Dyke went on to direct "Manhattan Melodrama," "San Francisco," "Marie Antoinette," "Andy Hardy Gets Spring Fever" and four "Thin Man" movies, to name a few.

Direct Link: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/11/movies/homevideo/fictitious-tales-actual-odysseys.html>

Blackstone nearing end of its run

Frank PEEBLES / Prince George Citizen
October 8, 2015 08:42 PM



The TV series Blackstone is entering its final season. One of its stars is Prince George's Steven Cree Molison, seen here with co-star Jessica Matten. - Handout photo

Blackstone is going dark, but there is still a final run of episodes to close out this all-Canadian hit drama.

Blackstone has been likened to Breaking Bad and Sons of Anarchy for its fearless grit, razor reality, and no-holds-barred dance between conflicts and characters.

At the heart of the cast is a Prince George actor who has won awards and international acclaim for his portrayal of one of the main Blackstone characters Daryl Fraser.

Steven Cree Molison has been a central part of the Blackstone show since its inception. Based in Vancouver but frequently back in his Prince George hometown, Molison said he was proud and honoured to be part of a project that has turned the heads of critics and popular audiences, and helped put First Nations issues at the front of public consciousness.

Another Prince George actor/musician, Tommy J. Mueller, also had a recurring role in Blackstone. Although not a member of the regular present cast, he has appeared in more than 20 episodes over the years and his character of Rick Amenakew was a popular villain in the plot.

Blackstone is set on a fictional reserve and follows the dramatic issues that emanate from there. In the process, it both highlights "res life" like never before in art and also shows the universal parallels - the common themes that run through all lives no matter where you live.

Molison was back in Prince George this past week and said he was looking forward to some new projects to work on after Blackstone comes to its end. In the past year he has been part of the cast of the book-based blockbuster 50 Shades of Grey, the TV movie Driven Underground starring Kristy Swanson and Emily Tennant, and also shot a small part with Sir Anthony Hopkins in the upcoming thriller Go With Me.

TV and movie projects have been Molison's main creative source, but he is also a writer and stage actor. He attended the Theatre North West production Art this past week and came away with a couple of sensations.

"I was totally running their lines in my own head, imagining how I would say it, what I would do with them," he said. "It gave me the itch. It's been a long time since I've been on stage and I this made me really want to get back out there."

The other sensation Art provided him with was gratitude. One of the three actors in that intense production was acclaimed B.C. theatre veteran Garry Davey. Davey happened also to be Molison's pivotal drama instructor at the William B. Davis Centre for Actor's Study. Molison surprised him after the play and the two enjoyed a long reunion visit.

There is already talk of reunions and/or movie versions of Blackstone, now that the five-season run is coming to a close. This talk is expected to escalate when the series finale builds to a crescendo. Production company Prairie Dog Film + Television said the last episodes (it runs Tuesday nights from Nov. 3 to Dec. 22 on APTN) would be ending the program on notes of "hope, healing and retribution - and will conclude with a dramatic finale" according to a company statement.

The man who ran Blackstone - writer, director and producer Ron E. Scott, said the Blackstone run was "incredible" and "we have taken the show to places where we could have only dreamed of when we started. The series's final season is once again filled with

intense, hard-hitting issues that have challenged viewers' perception of socially conscious storytelling on television."

Daryl's storyline involves making business decisions that drag him and his girlfriend Gina (played by Jessica Matten) into criminal implications. Financial ruin, violence and other dangers lurk over his character as the closing episodes unfold - nothing Daryl hasn't seen before.

The series currently broadcasts in Canada on APTN, in the United States on Hulu and HuluPlus, in New Zealand on Maori Television, and in Australia on SBS/NITV.

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/entertainment/local-a-e/blackstone-nearing-end-of-its-run-1.2081432#sthash.TQFAB6Qd.dpuf>

WAG's Inuit Art Centre project gets almost \$1M from Winnipeg Foundation

Donation means funds from private donors hits 60% mark, making project reality

By Brett Purdy, [CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 14, 2015 6:57 PM CT Last Updated: Oct 14, 2015 6:57 PM CT

The Winnipeg Art Gallery's planned new Inuit Art Centre got a gift Wednesday as the Winnipeg Foundation prepares to celebrate its 95th year, a cheque for \$950,000, one of the foundation's largest donations ever.

WAG CEO Stephen Borys said the money means fundraising for the new centre has now more than half the target for private donations, bringing the centre into closer focus.

"Where we are at with the private sector has convinced me the project will go ahead. The support thus far has been overwhelming. This adds to it and gives us great momentum," he said.

"Art is one of the most powerful tools to communicate ideas, symbols, [a] way of life. Most people never get the chance to travel, to see the land that is the context for the art making. The Inuit Art Centre can help convey something of that greatness," he added.

With more than 13,000 pieces the WAG has the largest collection of Inuit art in the world. The new centre will house and display those artifacts as well as offer programming and initiatives to bridge the divide between northern communities and cities in the south.

The \$60 million price tag for the project includes the building, endowment and programming.

The four-level, 40,000 square foot building will be directly adjacent to the existing building. In addition to Inuit and indigenous galleries, it will feature a vault in the entrance, space for artist and curator residencies and five studios offering year round programming.

It is hoped that shovels will be in the ground at the end of 2016 or beginning of 2017 with an expected construction timeline of two years.

The WAG also opened a new exhibit called the Inuit Art Centre project that outlines what the new gallery will look like and potential programming.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/wag-s-inuit-art-centre-project-gets-almost-1m-from-winnipeg-foundation-1.3271160>

Vancouver Art Gallery collection of First Nations art gets a boost

by [Carlito Pablo](#) on October 14th, 2015 at 3:23 PM
SHARED 30



Red Tailed Eagle Feathers mask by Robert Davidson. ROBERT DAVIDSON

The Vancouver Art Gallery now has the most significant collection in the world of works by famed First Nations artist Robert Davidson.

Thirteen pieces have been added to VAG holdings of work by the artist, whose Haida name Guud San Glans means Eagle of The Dawn, with a donation from the collection of aboriginal artworks from the late George Gund III of San Francisco.

In a news release Wednesday (October 14), the art gallery announced that it has acquired the Gund collection of 37 historical and contemporary pieces from various artists.

The Gund collection is currently on exhibit at the art gallery until January 31, 2016.

Thirteen, including eight masks, of the 37 pieces are by Davidson, whose numerous awards include the Order of British Columbia, and the Order of Canada.

Davidson, who is of Haida and Tlingit descent, is a master carver of totem poles and masks. He is also a painter, printmaker, and jeweler.

In its news release, the VAG noted that First Nations art are typically found in museums of history and anthropology rather than in art museums.

The art gallery stated that it wants to remedy this situation by building up its collection of Native art.

“The Gund collection greatly enhances our ability to show the history of art making in this part of the world while also providing an important counterbalance to the Euro-Canadian narratives of art making already in the collection,” gallery director Kathleen Bartels explained in the news release.

Bartels added: “It is an honour for the Vancouver Art Gallery to acquire this distinguished collection of First Nations art and to make it accessible to Gallery visitors. We are grateful to Mr. Gund III and his executors, Dorsey & Whitney LLP, for their assistance in securing this remarkable bequest.”

Direct Link: <http://www.straight.com/arts/557416/vancouver-art-gallery-collection-first-nations-art-gets-boost>

Joseph Boyden On Harper, First Nations, The Election, And Canadian Racism

Posted: 10/15/2015 4:00 pm EDT Updated: 51 minutes ago
Joshua Ostroff

The irony of this federal election campaign is that no matter who is elected on Oct. 19, many of the most pressing issues — energy, housing, health care — ultimately fall under provincial jurisdiction. There’s really only so much that the next government can do on its own.

Except for aboriginal issues, that is.

First Nations, Inuit, and Metis concerns all fall under federal jurisdiction, and yet those have been a minor part of the campaign. While Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau and NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair have [promised an inquest](#) into the more than 1,200 [missing and murdered indigenous women](#) in Canada, Conservative Leader Stephen Harper has dismissed such calls, even claiming that "most of these murders, [sad as they are, are in fact solved](#)."

Canada is one of the most advanced nations in the world and yet most aboriginal reservations [don't have clean drinking water](#). Many don't have fire departments. Housing is substandard, and schools are worse. [Inuit suicide rates](#) are 40 times the national average. First Nations children make up about [half of the foster care system](#) — despite aboriginals being only four per cent of the population.

Huffington Post Canada sat down with Giller Prize-winning author and aboriginal activist Joseph Boyden backstage at [We Day](#) where he spoke to thousands of students in Toronto. (This week, [he endorsed Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau](#) for prime minister.)

We discussed these ongoing crises, how the next government can address them, and if Canada is a racist country.



Why have indigenous issues played such a minor role in the election campaign?

The environment, energy, housing, it's all inter-related. These are not separate issues. First Nations, it covers everything in Canada, both the negatives and the positives, but it's something that obviously Harper doesn't want to speak about. He doesn't want to deal with First Nations [since the apology](#) [in 2008], which a lot of us believe was lip service without follow-through. It's obvious he doesn't want to.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis people, I think, are close to two million now in this country and that's a lot. It's a very powerful population [but] too often it's a second-class population. The fastest growing population group is aboriginal youth in our country. Do we leave them as second-class citizens or bring them in as a part of solutions in the future?

No one's talking about this and I'm not sure why. I think that people close their eyes sometimes, the average person, when they hear about First Nation issues in this country.

I [interviewed Paul Martin](#) a few years ago...

And he's a huge supporter of First Nations issues.

He spent his very brief reign as prime minister working on the [2005 Kelowna Accord](#), which Harper killed. Is that something that would still make sense for the next government to bring back?

If it's a new government in power. Because I know Harper will not do it. Whether it's New Democrat or Liberal or by chance a coalition, first thing I would do is bring back the Kelowna Accord so First Nations can get on that level playing field that the rest of Canadians have.

Can you explain what it is?

The Kelowna Accord was years in the making. It was revolutionary in that it was not just government funding towards First Nations; it was programs that First Nations created themselves.

A big part of it was education, and I think the biggest struggle that First Nations youth are facing is education. Maybe not even half First Nations youth are graduating high school in this country. So something is clearly broken. And it's not the youth, it's the system. The Kelowna Accord directly addressed that with education.

How is it possible that Third World conditions exist here in the "first world?"

I was teaching in the '90s up in James Bay, the Ontario side, in places like Kashechewan, Attawapiskat, Fort Albany, Peawanuck way up north, Moose Factory, and for the first time saw the poverty, the lack of running water, clean drinking water. I saw the cardboard shacks, basically, people had to live in.

I was amazed, I was shocked. And I go back now and things have gotten a little bit better, but not nearly what they should be in 20 years. This is not a First Nations problem. I think that some politicians like to say it's their problem not ours, but this is a Canadian problem.

Let's talk about the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women, which you call a "national tragedy."

Why is this not an election issue? What the focus of this election has become in so many ways is terror and this idea of fear. I've lived in the States for 21 years and watched this over and over again, the fear-mongering. Harper saying terrorism is the biggest threat to our country? How many people have been killed domestically because of terrorism in this country? Is it one? How many missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in this country? I've heard the number 1,800. Officially, it's 1,200, but it's much closer to 2,000.

What is going on with this imbalance and why are we not addressing what is a national crime? This is one of the greatest stains of our country. If you're an aboriginal woman, you're four times more likely to die violently than any other group in this country. Why are we not addressing this issue?

And we just heard that Inuit suicide rates that are 40 times higher than the national average. What can the federal government be doing to address that?

What happens — and I've watched it happen in communities I'm very close to — is that these waves of suicides begin happening. One kid does it, others begin doing it. Within a month, sometimes in communities of 1,000 people, 20 kids have taken their lives. When we hear this happening, as soon as it happens, you send in crisis teams just like you would in a war zone. That's only short-term. The long-term solution is education.

Aboriginal children also make up a disproportionate percentage of foster care kids. Often, because the housing is sub-standard on reserves, the kids are then taken away and brought into white homes in the city.

This has been going on for a long time, by the way. The [Sixties Scoop](#) is a great example of that, where children, if you were a social worker, you could walk on to any reserve you wanted and take whatever child you wanted.

My friend [Richard Wagamese](#), a great Ojibwe novelist, is a victim of that. And I say victim because he was taken from his community, ripped from his family, put into service basically as a slave on farms to different foster parents. I know a lot of people whose children have been taken away forcefully from them without, I believe, due process or the need to that.

There are situations where there's drug and alcohol abuse.

Yeah, absolutely. Not saying it's a perfect situation. Often times a child needs to be taken out of that place — maybe not off the reservation, but out of that particular home. I say it has to be a nation-to-nation issue. The treaties state it specifically, we are not wards of the state. We are a nation that needs to deal with Canada as another nation.

What is a possible solution to it?

Going in and looking at what the root cause is of the issues that might be happening in a family or a community. These are clearly often times dysfunctional situations, highly dysfunctional, and why? It's not because native people are dysfunctional people, it's because of the [residential school system](#).

I say that and people just kinda roll their eyes, but keep in mind the last residential school closed its doors in 1996. Seven generations of First Nations and Métis children were forcibly taken from their families, ripped from their families, and forced into cold, often [very abusive institutions](#). It's going to take generations for that healing to begin.

I talked to someone from a band up in northern Manitoba and what they're trying to do is [they're removing the parents from the house](#).

Love it. That's great. See that's forward thinking to me. What's the real problem? It's not the child, it's the parent. It's kind a tough love thing but for adults. And allow yourself to, like why am I drinking? Why am I not raising my child properly?

First Nations have to take control of our own and we have to admit that, yes, there are issues and problems and we have to deal with them.

Again, it's not them versus us. All of Canada should be concerned about our children. Our children, not theirs.

Our children.

2015 Canada, is it a racist country?

Absolutely. Yeah, of course we are. Let's put it this way, if you believe Canada is a post-racial society, you're probably white and you're probably male. Racism is alive and well, but we're a much more polite racist than Americans. I live in New Orleans, I know what racism is all about, I've watched it for 20 years. It's direct, it's ugly, it's bitter, it's angry.

And what is under anger? Fear.

North America, within 20 or 30 years, the white population is going to become a minority, and I think people know that. I think that's where the Tea Party came from. This fear that the future is coming and we're not going to be able to control it anymore. It's fear and Canada is a fearful country. We need to address it. Why don't we have a national inquiry on missing and murdered women right now? It's a form of racism.

Did you know native people weren't allowed to vote in Canada until the 1960s? Canadians don't know this and we need to know our history in order to move forward properly. We need to educate young people across Canada, not just on reserves, about our real history. And some of it's not good, some of it's really ugly.

But we have to look at that, right in the face if we're going to move forward and be successful.

How long do you think it's going to take for Canada to reach that level playing field that you're talking about?

I've heard that elders say it took seven generations to try and break us, it's going to take seven generations to heal us. And that's a long time.

You'll never meet more patient people than your average First Nations person, or Inuit person, or Métis person. These are people who are patient and will say, "Yep, it'll be a hundred years, but we'll wait. We're not going anywhere."

I'm watching the sea change happen now, from ignorance to understanding, and I'm very much an optimist.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/10/15/joseph-boyden-first-nations-federal-election_n_8260110.html

Fall harvest highlights culture, teachings

Thursday October 15, 2015

Game birds, carved eagle feathers, traditional medicines, Metis jigging, drumming, blueberry jam, snowshoes and bannock on a stick were highlighted at this year's Fall Harvest gathering in Thunder Bay.

"It's awesome — so far we have done the jam making, the bannock making and watched (Real Bouchard) paint his feathers on cedar," says Rachelle Pelletier, Aboriginal achievement tutor at Superior CVI High School in Thunder Bay. "We learned a lot about the bird plucking station and a lot about the blueberries that we all enjoyed."

Peawanuck's Joyce Hunter showed groups of students from Thunder Bay-area schools how to make boiled goose, including the plucking, cleaning, gutting and butchering of geese, during the Sept. 22-24 gathering at Fort William Historical Park.

"I talk about life in the north, about how expensive it is to live and how hard it is to get good nutritional food into the community," says Hunter, Thunder Bay's Aboriginal liaison strategy coordinator. "It gives a strong sense of how different life is in the northern communities as compared to the south."

Hunter also described the migration patterns, nesting habits and internal parts of geese at her station.

“It is good to let people know that this is a fact of everyday life in some of the communities in our province still,” Hunter says. “People continue to live this way; it is not something out of the dusty old history books.”

Bouchard shared his techniques for carving and painting eagle feathers out of cedar shakes with the students. He began the project in 2007 by creating a template of an eagle feather to transfer the image to a cedar shake for carving.

“I committed to creating 500 single eagle feather carvings,” Bouchard says. “And I’m almost there — I’ve got another 25 to go.”

Bouchard usually sands the cutout image into the proper shape before using a wood-burning tool to create the eagle feather details.

“Every one has an individual number,” Bouchard says. “I’ve got a few more to go and then this series will be done.”

Bouchard plans to keep the 500th eagle feather carving for himself in a wooden case. His eagle feather carvings have been gifted to graduating students and people who have contributed to the Aboriginal community.

“The carving itself is really therapeutic,” Bouchard says.

Pic Mobert’s Melissa Twance shared some of her knowledge about plants in the Thunder Bay area that First Nations people traditionally used as medicines and foods.

“Poplar bark contains the same kind of chemical that aspirin does,” Twance says. “(It) helps to alleviate any kinds of pains you may have, headaches, joint pains. It was used a lot for people with arthritis.”

Joan Panizza, a Metis Nation of Ontario community wellness worker, shared some of her knowledge about the history of Metis jigging and the importance of the Metis sash with the students.

“They enjoyed it and they had fun,” Panizza says. “It shows where they come from, for some of them. It teaches them about the different people in Canada, how we celebrate and gather together. Dancing is dancing and people still do it and have always done it.”

Kelvin Redsky, a Biwaase’aa youth outreach worker, shared stories about the drum teachings, the medicine wheel and the seven grandfather teachings with the students. He also spoke about the residential school history, treaty signings and cultural teachings.

“We need to educate each other on our cultures,” Redsky says. “Education is the key to identifying ourselves to them, but also them to identify themselves to us. It’s all about sharing the knowledge and it’s all about getting that peace within ourselves (out) to them.”

Direct Link: http://www.wawataynews.ca/archive/all/2015/10/15/fall-harvest-highlights-culture-teachings_26077

Aboriginal Business & Finance

Qikiqtani Inuit Association directors grill First Air, Canadian North over codeshare

'At the end of the day we run a business... we don't provide a social service,' says First Air vice-president

[CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 09, 2015 5:38 AM CT Last Updated: Oct 09, 2015 5:40 AM CT

Representatives from First Air and Canadian North got an earful about their codeshare agreement at the annual general meeting of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association in Iqaluit Thursday.

Not every community in Nunavut is directly affected by the codeshare agreement, but many people in the Qikiqtaaluk region, including in Pangnirtung, Qikiqtarjuaq, Clyde River and Pond Inlet, say their communities have been hit hard by the changes.



Peter Evvik, Qikiqtani Inuit Association's regional director for Pangnirtung, says 'having one airline into these communities is not working well.' (CBC)

The communities used to have daily flights from Canadian North but now only First Air flies to those communities.

"Having one airline into these communities is not working well," said Peter Evvik, QIA director for Pangnirtung.

"It's giving the residents a very hard time travel-wise and food security — it's affecting everything that comes to the community."

At the meeting, the regional directors with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association grilled representatives from the airlines. They demanded answers on cargo delays, seating shortages and medical travel backlogs.



First Air's vice-president-commercial, Bert van der Stege, says he stands by the codeshare agreement as 'the most efficient and sustainable way of air transportation in Nunavut.' (CBC)

First Air's vice-president of commercial affairs, Bert van der Stege, stands by the codeshare agreement as "the most efficient and sustainable way of air transportation in Nunavut."

"At the end of the day we run a business and we need to grow our business and invest in our business," he said. "Unfortunately we don't provide a social service."

He says without such an agreement, the airline would have to cancel routes all together.

He will be meeting with the Government of Nunavut tomorrow to hear its concerns.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/qikiqtani-inuit-association-directors-grill-first-air-canadian-north-over-codeshare-1.3263774>

Inuit org's airline ticket upgrade policy still grounded

"The amendments have not taken effect," Nunavut Tunngavik says

STEVE DUCHARME



Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.'s board of directors has yet to approve an amendment to its travel policy that would let executive members upgrade their flights to first class in certain circumstances. (FILE PHOTO)

The option for Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. executives to upgrade their flight seats has been quietly dropped by the Inuit organization — at least, for the time being.

“The NTI Board of Directors did not approve the final language of the proposed addition to the organization’s travel policy during last meeting. As a result, the amendments have not taken effect,” NTI said in a written statement emailed to *Nunatsiaq News*.

NTI President Cathy Towtongie and NTI Vice President James Eetoolook [proposed the amendment at a board of directors meeting](#) in Iqaluit Sept. 2.

The amendment would have allowed NTI executives to upgrade to executive or first-class seats in “extraordinary cases” of health or volume of travel.

NTI’s policy to date has been always to seek the most affordable tickets available.

PJ Akeeagok, the president of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, said during open debate Sept. 2 that there is little oversight by NTI to guarantee the upgrades are used properly, reminding his colleagues the upgrade would be paid for with beneficiaries’ money.

After Akeeagok’s objection, the board found a compromise, limiting the upgrade only to flights that are four hours or longer.

Though the motion passed during the public portion of the NTI meeting, the amendment was moved to an in-camera session to complete the final wording.

One month later, [the NTI Travel Policy](#), which is available online, has still not been officially amended since 2009.

“The amendments, with additional language, will be discussed during the next NTI board meeting,” NTI’s statement to *Nunatsiaq News* continued.

NTI’s 2015 annual general meeting is scheduled to run Oct. 20 to Oct. 22 in Iqaluit.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nti_airline_ticket_upgrade_policy_still_grounded/

Two Kamloops Businesses Receive Aboriginal Business Awards

The 7th Annual British Columbia Aboriginal Business Awards were handed out in Vancouver and among them are a few of Kamloops' best.

October 15, 2015 by [Tahirih Foroozan](#)



Business of the Year for the one to two person enterprise category went to T. Fraser Chiropractic Incorporated and River Fresh Wild Salmon received the Outstanding Achievement Award for Joint Venture Business of the Year.

"The surge in Aboriginal businesses in B.C. has created economic development initiatives in every corner of the province," said Chair of the B.C. Achievement Foundation Board of Directors Keith Mitchell. "Tonight's recipients exemplify the best of vision, enterprise, resourcefulness and entrepreneurship in Aboriginal business and their efforts are shaping communities while helping to build an economic future for this province."

The B.C. Aboriginal Business Awards were created in 2008.

Direct Link:

http://www.kamloopsbcnow.com/watercooler/news/news/Kamloops/15/10/15/Two_Kamloops_Businesses_Receive_Aboriginal_Business_Awards/

Aboriginal Community Development

Nunavut Inuit plan to renegotiate benefits, impacts, with Baffinland

"We know the big changes being proposed will impact Inuit life within the communities"

STEVE DUCHARME, October 09, 2015 - 1:40 pm



PJ Akeagok, attending his first annual general meeting as president of QIA, said the Inuit organization plans to visit and consult with communities impacted by the Mary River mine in North Baffin prior to renegotiating a new benefit and impacts agreement with mine owner Baffinland Iron Mines Corporation. (PHOTO BY STEVE DUCHARME)

The Qikiqtani Inuit Association hopes to renegotiate its Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement with Baffinland Iron Mines Corp. if the proposed Phase II of the Mary River mine gets a thumbs up by the Nunavut Impact Review Board.

Under the [Phase II plan](#), the mining company would ramp up overland ore hauling on the 100-kilometre tote road between the Mary River iron mine site and the Milne Inlet port.

If approved, the company would also extend their sea-shipping season to 10 months of the year and would require icebreakers in the winter.

Baffinland says high operating costs and plummeting global iron ore prices are forcing an increase in volume to maintain the project's profitability.

But Phase II is significantly different from what was originally proposed, the QIA says, and so [impacts and benefits](#) need to be re-examined.

"In our view, if Phase II were to be approved by NIRB, until the IIBA is either amended or renegotiated, the activity cannot go forward," said assistant director of major projects Justin Buller at the QIA's annual general meeting in Iqaluit Oct. 6.

“QIA’s view is stated for the record, and for the public, that the IIBA must be renegotiated prior to Phase II going ahead.”

Before the NIRB’s review of Phase II gets underway, the QIA will be visiting communities impacted by the Phase II — Hall Beach, Iglulik, Arctic Bay, Clyde River and Pond Inlet — according to a “community engagement strategy” resolution passed by the QIA board at the organization’s AGM.

The QIA plans to hold three to four events in each community, first to clarify the Phase II project to residents and then to consult them on related matters. The QIA will then summarize those consultations into a final report.

“We want to know what their concerns are. What are the issues that people think are going to come up with impacts to wildlife, access to hunting areas, issues with icebreaking or additional traffic on the tote road... this is how [the report] will form QIA’s stance,” said Buller.

Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. may also participate in the engagement strategy but that has yet to be confirmed.

“That’s where our voice is going to be, it’s going to come directly from Inuit, in particular the most impacted ones,” QIA President PJ Akeeagok told *Nunatsiaq News*.

“We’re planning to have a position before NIRB starts, so we’re hoping to get into the communities as early as November but that’s still to be finalized. We’re working hard to ensure that it starts immediately, knowing the enormity of the project,” he continued.

“We know it won’t be easy. We know the big changes being proposed will impact Inuit life within the communities, the culture, so there’s definitely a lot a stake.”

The QIA will also be pursuing a minimum Inuit employment goal with Baffinland, but disruptions in data delivery have made that figure tough to pin down. Communication with Baffinland, according to the QIA, has been improving.

The QIA expects the company to provide a revised report in November that will detail everything for the next year.

And the Inuit organization expects to deliver a hard number for Inuit employment during a joint executive meeting at the mine this January.

In September, Baffinland temporarily [decreased wages](#) for its Mary River workers by 10 per cent, citing lower demand for iron ore.

Under the current IIBA agreement between the QIA and Baffinland, the Inuit organization has received huge payouts that have substantially increased their financial clout.

Last year, the QIA received a [\\$20 million payout](#) from Baffinland as an initial payment on that IIBA.

In 2015, the QIA is still reporting a [\\$5.5 million surplus](#) due, in part, to the arrangement with Baffinland.

The QIA's annual general meeting, the 40th in the organization's history, was held Oct. 6 to Oct. 8 in Iqaluit.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavut_inuit_plan_to_renegotiate_benefits_impacts_with_baffinland/

Pilot project grows crops in Labrador to feed low-income families

By Matt McCann, [CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 11, 2015 7:58 AM NT Last Updated: Oct 11, 2015 7:58 AM NT



The Nunakatiiget Inuit Corporation launched a pilot project over the summer, planting vegetables at one of the local farms to help stock the community freezer. (Matt McCann/CBC)

It's harvest time across the province, and this year, for the first time, some low income families in Labrador will have access to fresh produce at their community freezer.

The Nunakatiiget Inuit Corporation started a pilot project over the summer, planting crops at one of the local farms to help stock the community freezer.

It usually stocks only country food such as berries, fish, and wild game like partridge and moose.

This year, they're pulling up carrots, turnips, beets, and potatoes — and hoping for a bumper crop.

"I've never done this before, so I'm not sure what it's going to amount to in regard to total pounds," said corporation chair Gary Mitchell. "If we can get 1,000 pounds of potatoes, I'd be happy with that. That means everybody gets 10 or 15 pounds of potatoes each."



Nunakatiiget Inuit Corporation Chair Gary Mitchell, showing off some of the harvested crops. (Matt McCann/CBC)

Most of the work happened earlier this year, when they spent weeks putting seeds in the ground.

Wet summer turned out to be a help

After that, there was weeding and care of the plants.

"We were fortunate this summer, in regard to we didn't have to do any watering because it was such a wet summer that there was no cost to getting it watered," Mitchell laughs.

Maybe because of the weather, the greens didn't grow very well.



Carrots are just one of the many crops that Mitchell and the others are harvesting. (Matt McCann/CBC)

The Newfoundland and Labrador Food Security Network says people living here have the lowest rate of consumption of fruit and vegetables in the country, and rely heavily on produce grown outside the province.

A hundred households

This freezer helps out about 100 Nunatsiavut households in the Upper Lake Melville area, and Mitchell thinks this will help them get more fresh food into their diet.

"Some of them might have small gardens at home, but this is the first time some of them will take home fresh produce," he said.

"I mean, you can always go to the store and get what you like, but a lot of our people on low income, unable to get out and do a little bit of farming on their own, or gardens. So this is going to be a plus for them, to have some fresh produce to take home, and assist them with a few more items for the table."



Carrots, turnips, beets, and potatoes are all crops being grown by the Nunakatiiget Inuit Corporation. (Matt McCann/CBC)

This is a first time harvest for the community freezer's coordinator, Kevin Blake, as well.

"I love it," he said. "They really look forward to this. They're probably on a tight budget. It will help them out big time. Once I told them we were doing it, they couldn't wait."

Next year may be bigger

After the harvest is done, and the food is delivered, Mitchell says the group will take a look at the cost of the program, and how much they got out of it.

Then, they'll decide whether to go bigger next year.

"It's something we need to promote here more in Lake Melville areas. It's an excellent place for growing crops, we have a good season, we have nice farms here," he said.

"There's a market out there, demand is out there, you go on the coast where they have to bring in vegetables from outside, I'm sure the farms here could supply the coast with vegetables if the business was right."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/pilot-project-grows-crops-in-labrador-to-feed-low-income-families-1.3264550>

Asia-Pacific Report: Chinese community should celebrate ties to B.C. First Nations

By Chuck Chiang, Vancouver Sun October 12, 2015



Chinese traditional medicine

When the Vancouver arm of an Asian Buddhist non-profit group said in August that B.C.'s First Nations groups have become one of the most supportive groups behind traditional Chinese medicine, they were not joking.

When I last wrote about Tzu Chi Canada's efforts to promote Chinese traditional medicine in the province, they were planning a full-day clinic at the Sumas First Nations on Sept. 19. According to organizers, the team of six doctors treated about 40 members of the band. The visit generated enough interest from the community that another clinic will make its way to Sumas on Oct. 18. (Some band members also expressed interest in pursuing studies in Chinese medicine, officials said.)

The group started this year a number of Chinese medicine clinics focusing on aboriginal communities, including free clinics at the Aboriginal Mother Centre. Organizers said they have found First Nations groups more comfortable with traditional Chinese medicine, since the practice of using natural herbal remedies is part of the heritage of that community.

This is among one of the curious links between Canada's First Nations people and Chinese culture. In August, China's Consul-general in Vancouver, Liu Fei (along with

provincial and municipal B.C. officials) visited the Musqueam First Nation in Vancouver for a ceremony recognizing one such link.

In 2012, videos produced by a UBC initiative “Chinese Canadian Stories” brought forth a rich history of early Chinese settlers from Guangdong settling in the Lower Mainland, who — due to the fact they were unable to bring families here and not widely accepted by mainstream society — married Musqueam women and became part of that community.

Today, a number of Musqueam members carry hereditary links to the Chinese community, something that the August ceremony celebrated.

Perhaps it is time to celebrate Chinese-Canadians’ deep relationships with B.C. First Nations.

Direct Link:

http://www.vancouversun.com/health/asia+pacific+report+chinese+community+should+celebrate+ties+first+nations/11432122/story.html?_lsa=7c49-ded9

Ottawa org building national urban Inuit strategy

“We’re talking literally thousands of Inuit in a population of only 60-odd thousand”

LISA GREGOIRE, October 13, 2015 - 10:05 am



Tungasuvvingat Inuit executive director Jason Leblanc is hoping to build capacity among urban Inuit associations across Canada and engage southern Inuit to use their ample talents to embrace and support their Inuit homelands. (FILE PHOTO)

OTTAWA — Jason LeBlanc didn't know what he'd find when he toured five Canadian cities looking for Inuit who live there and agencies who serve them. He found good news and bad.

Edmonton had recently revived its Inuit organization and St. John's was in the process of trying to incorporate theirs. Organizations in Winnipeg and Montreal were both vibrant and looking at ways to expand and diversify.

But Toronto? That was another story, LeBlanc said. While statistics show Canada's largest city has at least 1,385 Inuit residents, there are virtually no Inuit specific organizations, or even any Inuit services within Aboriginal agencies.

"It seemed almost bordering on hopelessness, to be honest," said LeBlanc, executive director of Tungasuvvingat Inuit, an Ottawa-based agency which runs numerous programs for Inuit in the nation's capital.

"There were Inuit who'd lived there for 30-plus years, who'd raised kids and grandkids there and were saying there's nothing here for us. There's over 60 Aboriginal providers and not one of them is doing any Inuit-specific stuff."

At the start of the Toronto visit, in a space donated by a local legal aid group, only five or six participants showed up, mostly people TI had tracked down through social media.

When asked how many Inuit they thought lived in Toronto, they guessed a couple hundred, tops. When told it was well over a thousand, they were surprised, LeBlanc said, and dismayed that they'd never organized any cultural gatherings.

At a follow-up meeting several weeks later, they held a pot luck feast and about 30 people showed up, keen to keep the momentum going, he said. It's a start.

The start of a strategy to get urban Inuit participating in the local urban economy, LeBlanc said.

And though Inuit often come south to escape the North, LeBlanc is hoping to bring them back into the fold, to reinvigorate pride in culture, to support their northern neighbours and maybe even be a source of strength within Inuit Nunangat.

"We want to start to shift that view, seeing all the great capacity in these cities, all the talent, the significant population base," LeBlanc said. "We're talking literally thousands of Inuit in a population of only 60-odd thousand."

Tungasuvvingat Inuit secured just under \$800,000 in grant money last year through Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada to do a [series of consultations](#) in an effort to shore up existing urban Inuit groups and organize grassroots movements in places where there are none.

Inuit groups, including those in Montreal and Ottawa, have long complained that federal money earmarked for “Aboriginal” programs in Canada gets largely funnelled into well-organized First Nations groups, while Inuit-specific efforts remain underfunded.

So TI is hoping to build an information database on urban Inuit and fortify a network of Inuit service agencies to turn that imbalance around.

Inuit in St. John’s, for example, have been operating out of the local Native Friendship Centre, but in order to access Inuit-specific money from the Nunatsiavut Government, they need to incorporate their own body and offer their own programs.

TI is focusing efforts on cities which have the largest Inuit populations, according to 2011 numbers from Statistics Canada: Edmonton —1,480, Winnipeg — 420, Toronto— 1,385, Montreal — 1,535 and St. John’s — 1,440.

Those numbers are likely too low, he said, considering the 2011 population figure StatsCan offered for Ottawa-Gatineau was 1,445 and it’s actually closer to 2,500.

LeBlanc is now organizing a national gathering in Ottawa, Nov. 5 to Nov. 6, where five Inuit representatives from each city will gather to share ideas, learn from each other and help to grow a network of urban Inuit from Alberta to Newfoundland.

“It’s an opportunity in November for local groups to get together for peer learning and peer sharing. What are you doing in this city? What are you doing in that city. Oh, we could be doing that,” LeBlanc said. “So we want to continue to build that capacity.”

LeBlanc said he’ll then go back to those cities over the winter to continue offering advice on structure, governance, funding proposals and so forth and will then hold a second national gathering in Ottawa in March 2016.

While each city had its own unique needs and strengths, some common themes emerged, LeBlanc said:

- justice issues such as lack of translation services and over-representation of Inuit in the justice system;
- child welfare and a lack of family services for Inuit families;
- lack of housing services and Inuit homelessness;
- healthcare service gaps such as primary healthcare in Inuktitut and preventative care; and,
- barriers to employment including work experience, training, language, childcare and criminal record pardons.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674ottawa_org_building_national_urban_inuit_strategy/

Symposium to address transportation options on Highway 16 corridor

by [Shaun Thomas - The Northern View](#)

posted Oct 13, 2015 at 7:00 AM— updated Oct 13, 2015 at 8:27 AM

Transportation options available between Prince Rupert and Prince George will be the focus of a symposium planned for Smithers next month.

The First Nations Health Authority and the Ministry of Transportation are partnering to host the Nov. 24 event, which will include representatives from 23 First Nations along Highway 16.

"This symposium will build on the work we've done to date as we continue to engage First Nations to find practical, affordable and sustainable solutions for the communities along the Highway 16 corridor," said Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Todd Stone.

"I'm confident that, through our partnership with the First Nations Health Authority, and the information and ideas gathered at the symposium, we will be able to develop a vision for a community-based transportation model that is supported by First Nations and municipal communities along the Highway 16 corridor."

The symposium will follow a survey of current transportation options available along the highway, the results of which will form the basis of discussion at the gathering.

"Safe and affordable medical transportation for First Nations along the Highway 16 corridor is our goal" said First Nations Health Authority chief operating officer Richard Jock.

"The FNHA assumed responsibility for medical transportation in 2013 and we look forward to working with First Nations, government and other partners to create new models which address transportation along the Highway 16 corridor in a more fundamental way."

Direct Link: <http://www.thenorthernview.com/news/332400612.html>

Bad water: 'Third World' conditions on First Nations in Canada

Two-thirds of First Nations have been under at least 1 water advisory between 2004 and 2014

By Joanne Levasseur, Jacques Marcoux, [CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 14, 2015 5:00 PM CT
Last Updated: Oct 15, 2015 10:20 AM CT



Two-thirds of all First Nation communities in Canada have been under at least one drinking water advisory at some time in the last decade, a CBC News investigation has revealed. The numbers show that 400 out of 618 First Nations in the country had some kind of water problem between 2004 and 2014.

The longest running water advisory is in the Neskantaga First Nation in Ontario, where residents have been boiling their water for 20 years.

Nazko First Nation, Alexis Creek First Nation and Lake Babine, all in British Columbia, are next on the list with water problems spanning 16 years.

Between 2004 and 2014, 93 per cent of all First Nations in Saskatchewan and New Brunswick reported at least one water advisory in their communities. Alberta is close behind at 87 per cent.

The lowest provincial rate is 51 per cent in Manitoba.



Three-and-a-half-year-old Hailey Sakanee takes a sip of treated water. Her community, Neskantaga First Nation, has been under a water advisory for two decades. (CBC)

A variety of factors can trigger a water advisory, ranging from bad pipe connections, low pressure, improper filtration and disinfection right up to contamination with bacteria. The most common kind of advisory, by far, is a boil water advisory.

"It's absolutely outrageous," said Cindy Blackstock, director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society and associate professor at the University of Alberta. "That very absolute necessity of life is being denied to a whole group of people in this country as wealthy as ours."

"You end up with a real sense of despair and stress in these communities," she added, "and it could be alleviated by one simple promise...provide everyone a good glass of water, and stop discriminating in service provision."

On any given day, official water advisories on First Nation communities can number 150 or more. Even though experts can't pin down the exact reason, that number has steadily climbed over the last decade.

"I was very surprised to see the number of First Nations within each province that were on boil water advisories," said Lalita Bharadwaj, associate professor in the University of Saskatchewan's School of Public Health.

Bharadwaj said governments have spent about \$2 billion on the issue between 2001 and 2013, but the problems are as severe as ever. She said a more targeted approach is needed, along with better communication between government and First Nations.

"The percentages across the country are extremely high," she said. "That says to me that the situation is a perennial issue, that not enough attention has been paid."

"So 10 years ago, we were at 30 per cent of the water treatment systems in First Nations posed a high risk to safe drinking water, and today we have the same."

Chronic government underfunding of water systems is to blame for the lack of progress, said Emma Lui of the Council of Canadians. She said a national assessment commissioned by the federal government found \$470 million was needed per year over 10 years.

"Giving \$165 million year after year is simply not enough," said Lui.

'Appalling conditions,' says Nazko chief

In the interior of B.C., the Nazko First Nation has been under a water advisory for 16 years, a situation the chief calls unacceptable.

"It's very upsetting. We live in Canada but on reserve it feels like Third World conditions," said Nazko Chief Stuart Alec. "Drinking, bathing — it's pretty appalling these conditions exist in this country."

Even though \$3.5 million went into fixing the system a couple of years ago, the water advisory persists. Alec blames the way the project was executed for its failure.

"They took the easy route. They sent money but did not put someone on the ground," he said.

"They filtered out money so it would look like they were dealing with the issue, but they needed a project manager on the ground to oversee the project and report to the band and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. None of that happened."

Alec said the water system has been plagued with problems from the beginning, ranging from bad connections to lack of training.

Part-time water tech at Pinaymootang

In Manitoba, Pinaymootang First Nation has been under a water advisory for the last 859 days — an order that affects just the arena and gas bar. But residents distrust the quality of the tap water in their own homes so much that most pick up bottles of drinking water from the treatment plant.



Derrick Gould, a band councillor with the Pinaymootang First Nation in Manitoba, describes years of brown baths, bottled water and boiling water in kettles when the treated water runs out. (CBC)

"If this was in a town or municipality somewhere else, the news would be all over this," said Derrick Gould, an outgoing band councillor from Pinaymootang.

Gould described years of brown baths, bottled water and boiling kettles when the treated water runs out. He said the harsh chlorine that's used to kill bacteria has also ruined people's laundry.

"I know that our water plant facility is too small for the size of our community," said Gwen Traverse, the First Nation's health director.

The budget to run the water treatment plant is small, too. One part-time employee who is paid \$15,000 a year is taking care of the water in the community of 1,200 people. But it takes more than part-time hours to get the job done.

"She's doing it on her own time and dime," said Traverse. "I'm glad that she's doing it for her own community, but it makes me feel bad."

A drinking water advisory can affect as little as one building. It does not always represent a problem with the entire water system in the community, according to the Health Canada website.

Health Canada declined an interview request and said it had no comment on the data but a spokesperson said the department "knows about the problem that is both serious and complex".

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada declined an interview. In an emailed statement, AANDC said it provided \$54,000 to Nazko for new arsenic filters. The work is expected to be completed by the end of this month.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/bad-water-third-world-conditions-on-first-nations-in-canada-1.3269500>

Chief Isadore Day on clean water for First Nations

Chief Isadore Day on why ending the boil-water advisories affecting 93 First Nations communities is critical, achievable and a human right

[Cathy Gulli](#)

October 15, 2015



Isadore Day, Wiindawtegowinini is the newly elected regional chief of Ontario for the Assembly of First Nations. He was Chief of Serpent River First Nation, from 2005 to 2015. During that time, he negotiated a new water-treatment plant for his community. Early in the federal election campaign, Day challenged each party to commit to end all boil-water advisories on First Nations reserves within five years. Last week, Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau accepted the challenge. The next day, *Maclean's* interviewed a public health researcher specializing in risk assessment, who said the goal may be unrealistic. But Day insists it can be done. Today, there are 133 advisories in place, affecting 93 First Nations communities across Canada.

Q: What are your thoughts on Trudeau's promise to end boil-water advisories within five years?

A: This is what governments should have done long ago. The reality is that the ongoing problem of contaminated water left unresolved has the potential to cause harm, and, in many cases, death, as we've seen in Walkerton in 2007 with the E. coli contamination. I think Mr. Trudeau's commitment is a responsible step forward.

Q: NDP Leader Tom Mulcair committed to ensuring all First Nations have access to clean water within seven or eight years.

A: The commitment to do it in five is not unachievable. With something as serious as contaminated water, governments have to be prepared to take a bold step. I'm a bit disappointed by Thomas Mulcair's commitment in that respect.

Q: What have been the barriers to ensuring that First Nations communities have access to clean drinking water?

A: There is the obvious issue of diversity, that not all issues in First Nations are the same . . . Ultimately, this is going to [come] down to the type of investment made by the federal government.

Q: Is clarity about whose role it is to facilitate water management part of the problem?

A: The fiduciary responsibility to ensure safety rests with the Crown. It also rests with First Nation communities. So there's a chain of responsibility and that represents points of obligation: Who is responsible for the funding? Who is responsible for the policies? Who is responsible for maintaining operations? This is where it cannot be a top-down approach. We have to recognize the jurisdictional issues that will need to be ironed out to ensure that the plan is foolproof.

Q: Why might a First Nations community be under a boil-water advisory now?

A: It could be an inferior system, or perhaps that community doesn't have a communal system; they're all on individual wells, and the source of that water could have high mineral content or undissolved organics. At that point, there is no telling what you're drinking. Treatability studies are the starting point. The first part of this five-year commitment should be [ensuring] that each community [has] its own distinct study to determine exactly what the needs are, what the characteristics of the issues are, and what the cost of mitigating those issues is.

Q: What are the consequences of boil-water advisories?

A: The first is, obviously, health. We're hearing about rashes and sores, that [people] are getting sick as a result of ingestion or even because of washing with the water. There is frustration at the community level; First Nations people are watching the rest of society enjoy and take for granted clean water. For First Nations that see developers come into their territory, they're asking themselves justified questions: Why are we less-than? People leave their communities; they say, "This is no quality of life for me and my family." If a community doesn't have potable drinking water, chances are, you're not going to get economic development coming in. So it really leaves the community at a level of Third World conditions.

Q: Do people have to buy bottled water when their communities are under boil-water advisories?

A: Most do. Where there is obvious outcry, the federal government is having to haul water into communities. It doesn't make fiscal sense to any government to continue to mitigate the issue by trucking water in that has to be purchased.

Q: What has been your own experience in Serpent River?

A: We have gotten our water from bedrock reservoirs. We've had problems with maintaining proper yield for a community of 400 people. We've had high mineral content. [We've also experienced] the instability of having a number of decentralized

communal systems. When we tried to tie all the systems together, it was determined that [there was] potential for one part of the system to contaminate another; or we would have to shut down because the system wasn't producing water. We would wind up in a boil-water situation. We negotiated for the last decade with the federal government, and we were finally able to build a \$12.6-million water-treatment plant that we've just commissioned this year.

Q: How has that changed things for the community?

A: We now have one source. We have the latest technology to ensure the water is going to be clean and safe. But we also have some other issues to consider: the cost of maintaining that system, and where is the overarching authority and legislation coming from?

Q: How has it changed things for the families living there?

A: It makes life easier. We no longer have to live under a boil-water advisory. We are going to have a sense of safety and security. We will be able to provide safe drinking water for the people who come into our community, and that could mean economic development.

Q: What's your hope for the future?

A: In Ontario, we have a number communities that have expressed deep concern that the federal government has taken a step backward under the current Conservative regime. However, if the next federal government is going to make a commitment to work with a five-year benchmark, then that gives us all a target to work toward. I think it is a responsible step forward. It's a bold step forward. It's one that creates a level of certainty that we are going to see some action from government.

Q: It couldn't be a more important issue.

A: This is a complex issue and it has a multi-jurisdictional characteristic to it: First Nations, the provinces and the federal government. As long as you've got all the parties working together with the same commitment, this is possible. But it's going to take investment and political will. There's no other way around it. Clean drinking water is about the human right to health. All Canadians have that right. So why shouldn't First Nations have that right?

Direct Link: <http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/chief-isadore-day-on-clean-water-for-first-nations/>

Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

Aboriginal man's unimaginably bleak final day

By Christie Blatchford, The Starphoenix October 9, 2015

It's impossible to capture the lunacy of what's going on here, where the crippled coroner's inquest system collides with the products of the country's broken First Nations reserve system.

The inquest is examining the tragic deaths of seven aboriginal young people over the course of almost 11 years ending in 2011.

All came from remote Northern Ontario reserves to Thunder Bay to go to school.

Five drowned in local rivers.

In four of those deaths - Jethro Anderson and Reggie Bushie, both 15, Kyle Morrisseau, 17, and Curran Strange, 18 - alcohol intoxication was deemed a contributing factor, with the body of the fifth boy, 15-yearold Jordan Wabasse, too decomposed for the pathologist to determine how much he'd been drinking.

The lone girl, 18-year-old Robyn Harper, died outright of acute alcohol toxicity, lost in the bright lights of the big city on the great lake after only two days in town.

She was deposited, heavily intoxicated, in the hallway of her so-called "boarding home" one night by workers who prowl city streets looking for aboriginal kids in trouble, and found dead the next morning.

The outlier case is that of a 21-year-old named Paul Panacheese, who died of unknown causes after collapsing at his mother's home. His death remains unexplained, though a forensic pathologist testified this week she suspects he may have had a stealth cardiac problem that didn't show up even at autopsy.

Coroner's counsel Trevor Jukes told the jurors when the inquest began this week that the first evidence would deal with the two cases where the young people died in private homes.

Inquests are meant to answer the "five questions" (who is the deceased, how, when and where did he die and by what means), but their benefits are held to be the publicity that brings attention to serious issues and that community members may be satisfied that no death of one of their own will be concealed or ignored.

But the recommendations of a jury, which can run into the hundreds, don't carry the force of law, and many, if not most, traditionally aren't enacted.

And over the years, major inquests have become unwieldy quasi-public inquiries, where virtually every interested party (which might be even indirectly criticized) is represented by lawyers, almost invariably paid at public expense, and who are thus there, at least in part, to protect the rears or advance the agendas of their various clients.

On Thursday, this inquest called witnesses in the Panacheese death - first, his mother, Maryanne, then, by video from their far-flung reserves, his former girlfriend, Kyra Kaminawash, and a cousin who was then living at the same house, Richer Kessickquayash.

The Panacheese family is from the Mishkeegogamang First Nation, called Mish by almost everyone. About 500 clicks northwest of Thunder Bay, about 900 people live there on two reserves.

Mish is hardly a sanctuary. As a recent report noted, between 1982 and 2001, its people suffered an astronomical accidental death rate of 52 per cent compared with six per cent in the general Canadian population. This figure emerged in a leading question from Julian Falconer, the lawyer who represents Nishnawbe Aski Nation, or NAN, the political organization which encompasses the youths' reserves.

Yet at one point, questioning Maryanne, who in her son's last year of school had left the reserve and her position as a band councillor to come to Thunder Bay to "look after my boy," as she put it, Falconer asked, "You left all that to protect your son?" A casual listener might have imagined Maryanne had left behind a Shangri-La, rather than a grinding life in an impoverished reserve riven by alcohol abuse and a shocking rate of accidental death and suicide. Paul's last night, as described by his mom, girlfriend and cousin, was unimaginably bleak.

Paul and Kyra skipped school and arrived at the house in the early afternoon. Maryanne didn't allow drinking in the house, so friends came over later to play poker. At some point, Paul decided to go drinking with other friends, and Kyra left too, ultimately to go drinking with hers.

Later, the mom heard the doorbell ring and got up to let her son in, then went back to bed. She could hear him futzing about downstairs but, suddenly, amid those comforting noises, heard him fall.

She came downstairs to find him, face down on the floor. No one asked, but she seems to have assumed he was drunk (she knew he drank, though not that he also used "Ecstasy, Percs, Oxy and cocaine," as Kyra listed when asked, "the whole time I knew him"), and took his glasses off and tried to straighten them, telling him to get up.

She saw he wasn't moving, slapped his face gently but couldn't wake him, and ran upstairs to get Richer, who was then just 16 or 17.

He saw his cousin "all bluish and purplish," and "tried to perform CPR, but I was in shock but couldn't do anything besides be there with Maryanne." As he put it a bit later, "Like I knew what to do but I didn't have the strength to do anything."

Maryanne and Richer broke down in tears; Kyra's emotions were as if dulled, somehow worn out. None seemed to have known Paul very well, or else were unable to articulate what they knew.

All were asked with great gravity by the lawyers about Paul's "visions and dreams" and plans for the future, as though a boy who drank and used all those drugs and came from Mish really ever had one.

Born into all that darkness, poor Paul Panacheese was nonetheless additionally cursed with a wonky heart.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/aboriginal+unimaginably+bleak+final/11426229/story.html>

First Nations student deaths inquest: 'Help us,' mom pleads

'They were made fun of, eggs were thrown at them,' mother says of son's experience in Thunder Bay

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 09, 2015 6:07 PM ET Last Updated: Oct 10, 2015 4:38 PM ET



Maryanne Panacheese says her son Paul cared deeply about his friends and fellow students, and worried about their safety in the city. (Jody Porter/CBC)

The mother of one of the First Nations students who died while he was away from home attending high school in Thunder Bay is asking for help to help keep other students safe in the Ontario city.

The death of Paul Panacheese, along with those of six other First Nations students, is the subject of one of the largest inquests in Ontario history. It began on Oct. 5 and is scheduled to run through to March 2016.

All of the students, aged 15 to 21, left their remote First Nations in northern Ontario to attend high school in Thunder Bay. None of their communities have schools that go beyond grade 10. They died between 2000 and 2011.

"As a mom you want your children to be successful and get a good education," Maryanne Panacheese said about her decision to let Paul leave his home in Mishkeegogamang First Nation, about 300 kilometres northwest of Thunder Bay, and come to the city for high school.

"I just want to say to the city of Thunder Bay, those are our kids coming out for education," Panacheese said in an exclusive interview with CBC News. "I just want to tell them, can you help us.? Can you help our kids get education, because we need them in our communities for things to change in our communities."



Paul Panacheese, from Mishkeegogamang First Nation, died in 2006 while attending school in Thunder Bay. He was 21. (CBC)

Panacheese was the first of the family members to testify at the inquest. She told the jurors the city was a difficult place for Paul as he bounced around between 10 different boarding homes while trying to get through Grades 10-12.

"Sometimes he said they were made fun of," Panacheese said of her son's reports about life as a First Nations student in the city. "Eggs were thrown at them."

Later she said she advised him to "just co-exist with the non-natives because that's the way it's got to be."

"I told him not to ever say bad things or treat anybody bad that's not his race," she said. "I didn't want him to respond to the negative attitudes he was experiencing."

'I wanted to be with my boy'

Panacheese said she left her job and two other children at home in Mishkeegogamang while she moved to the city in 2006 for Paul's final year at school.

"I moved to Thunder Bay because I wanted to be with my boy and look after him myself," she said. "He said, 'You know mom, when I get my Grade 12, I'll be on my own. You don't have to help me,' he said, 'I'll help myself.'"

In November of 2006, Paul came home from visiting friends late at night and collapsed on the kitchen floor.

In her testimony, [Panacheese spelled out in heartbreaking detail and halting words](#) her growing panic as she realized something was terribly wrong.

She said she got a pillow and put it under her son's head and began patting his cheeks.

"I said, 'Paul, get up, go to your bed or the couch to sleep,'" Panacheese said through tears, while many in the courtroom wiped their eyes.

Eventually, she said, she called 911. She recalled that police came and there was a trip to the hospital. Paul was dead. He was 21.

"It was hard to talk about over and over again and still not really getting answers what really happened to my boy," she said of her hours of testimony. "I don't know, maybe I'll never really find out what really happened."

A pathologist testified on Tuesday that Paul likely died of an undetected hereditary heart condition. But his mother hopes the inquest will provide more than clinical details about her son and the other students who died.

"What I'm hoping for out of this inquest is changes for our students — to the way they make sure they're safe to get their education," she said. "That's what I'm really hoping for is that they'll get their education and they'll be looked after so they can go home."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-student-deaths-inquest-help-us-mom-pleads-1.3265316>

Overlooked tragedy of Quebec's aboriginal young people

Their deaths go unnoticed. They do not make headlines. But a disproportionate 259 aboriginal children and youth have died violently or in unusual circumstances since 2000.



Rene Petiquay, 28, says he often had suicidal thoughts while growing up on Manawan reserve in northern Quebec. One day he walked through the streets with a noose around his neck before turning social services for help. The difficulties he faced are not uncommon for aboriginal children in Quebec, according a La Presse analysis of data.

By: Gabrielle Duchaine Caroline Touzin La Presse, Published on Mon Oct 12 2015

It is a tragedy nobody talks about. But 259 aboriginal children and youth have died violently or in unusual circumstances in Quebec since 2000, according to an investigation by La Presse

Suicides, accidents, illness, murders: the rate of suspicious deaths among young Inuit and First Nations people is almost three to four times higher than it is for Quebec youth in general.

Their deaths go unnoticed. They do not make headlines. However, the families of these young victims remain reeling for years.

During the past 15 years, 3,000 young Quebecers under the age of 19 have died in violent or suspicious circumstances. Of these, some 260 are aboriginal children — more than half of them Inuit — according to the La Presse investigation, which analyzed thousands of Quebec coroners' reports dealing with the deaths of minors and 18-year-olds since 2000.

This corresponds to roughly 9 per cent of suspicious deaths of all Quebec children and adolescents during this period. But aboriginal youth represent only 2.6 per cent of Quebecers in that age range.

The data for aboriginal youth shows their suicide rate is unusually high, as is their rate of sudden infant death syndrome, lung disorders, diseases and accidents of all kinds.

In 2012, Tessa Chachai-Petiquay, from Wemotaci, an Atikamekw reserve north of Shawinigan, suffocated between a couch and a mattress placed on the floor, on which she slept with her parents. She was 2 months old. The coroner denounced the wretched conditions of the family's rented housing.

The next year, Tukaq Amarualik was driving a snowmobile at a high speed through the northern village of Puvirnituk in Nunavik. The 17-year-old had been drinking. His friend, Quinuajuak Mina, 15, was a passenger. Amarualik failed to negotiate a curve and slammed into a metal staircase. Both died instantly.

In 2009, Zachary Adams, 13, from Akwesasne Mohawk reserve southwest of Montreal, bought an AK-47 rifle. His father asked him to take it back to the gun seller — a friend of his brother — but the seller refused to return his money. Adams kept the rifle and ammunition hidden in his bedroom. One day the father scolded his son, who had been suspended from school for possession of marijuana. The teenager was locked in his room, where shot himself in the head.

The same year, Anna-Louisa Oginany, 13, of Lac-Simon, an Algonquin reserve in Abitibi, hanged herself with a nylon rope attached to a beam in her ceiling. Her cousin had committed suicide three months before. "I miss you so much and I cannot live without you," wrote Anna-Louisa in a letter found in her computer.

Multiple causes

Suicide is the leading cause of violent death for those 18 and younger in Quebec's aboriginal communities, the La Presse investigation reveals. According to the data, 102 teenagers have taken their own lives since 2000. The youngest was 11.

The data also reveals at least 73 avoidable fatalities, including fires, car or snowmobile accidents or drownings. In many cases, one of those involved was intoxicated or had been negligent.

This past summer an 8-month-old died in a house fire in the Inuit village of Puvirnituk. The police investigation concluded a cigarette caused the blaze. The fire chief confessed to the local newspaper that "nobody knew how to use the equipment" and called for urgent training for his men.

"In general, (indigenous communities) are much more likely to be poor, to live in substandard housing and have difficulty accessing health care," says a report by the Canadian Paediatric Society on the First Nations, Inuit and Métis health.

Problems associated with remoteness or lack of resources, as in the case of the fire in Puvirnituk, are also responsible for dozens of deaths.

In 2011, for example, a 1-year-old boy died of septic shock on the plane carrying him to the hospital. Papigattuk Kadjulik had spent the night at the health centre in his Inuit village of Kangisujuaq on the Ungava peninsula.

The medical team decided to transfer him by emergency air ambulance to the nearest hospital. He didn't make it.

Like young Papigattuk, 70 babies died of suspicious causes before their first birthday, according to the data.

There have been cases of sudden infant death syndrome. Newborns, especially in the Far North, succumbed to lung infections that are hardly ever fatal in the south. Parents have crushed their children as they slept in the same bed.

Cry from the heart

"We struggle. Do Quebecers know that we struggle? Do they care?" asked Siasi Smiler Irqumia, the mayor of Inukjuak, a remote village of 1,600 on the eastern edge of Hudson Bay.

"It's so frustrating to lose so many young people. Youth are our future. We try to make sure that our people are OK, that they do not suffer all the time. But we don't have enough resources to heal our community."

More and more aboriginal young people see parenthood as a way out of poverty. Leaders are sounding the alarm.

In Manawan, an Atikamekw reserve of 2,200 inhabitants in the Lanaudière region, there will be 85 births this year. The chief of the band council, Jean-Roch Ottawa, describes the baby boom as a ticking "time bomb."

"Imagine all the new housing, health services, child care spaces, classrooms and teachers we will need if we do nothing," says the former businessman. "In 10 years, it'll be what: 120 pregnancies per year? Federal funding does not follow that boom."

Chief Ottawa, himself a father, is concerned about the abilities of these young parents — sometimes as young as 13 or 14 — to care for their children.

There are similar concerns for the Inuit.

"Here, children are having children," says Andy Moorhouse, corporate secretary for Makivik Corp., an organization mandated to protect the rights and interests of Inuit from Nunavik. "The average age for having a first child is 16 or 17 years. It's rare for someone who is 20 to not be a parent."

Moorhouse, a former mayor of Inukjuak, speaks from experience.

“I had my first at 17. I did not know how to raise a child. I was too young,” he admits.
“Young people must understand that they are not obliged to have a child so young.”

In Canada, nearly a third of aboriginals are aged 14 and under, according to Statistics Canada figures. The proportion is even higher in Nunavik, where 40 per cent of Inuit are younger than 15. Thirteen per cent are under 4.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/10/12/overlooked-tragedy-of-quebecs-aboriginal-young-people.html>

Rash of Inuit youth crime a sign of social neglect, says youth leader

“I think youth are crying out for help in the way that makes sense to them”

LISA GREGOIRE, October 13, 2015 - 8:30 am



National Inuit Youth Forum President Maatalii Okalik says if we don't give children and youth safe, comfortable places to offload their pain and desires, they are bound to act out, sometimes with negative consequences. (FILE PHOTO)



Sherry Mulak-McNeil, Nunavut's new Representative for Children and Youth, said parents and adults need to support children when they make mistakes and part of that is teaching them to be accountable for their mistakes. (FILE PHOTO)

While everyone points fingers at neglectful parents, overworked teachers, paltry recreation programs and absentee leadership as the cause of a recent spate of youth crime in the North, one young woman suggests that everyone who can should stop complaining and step up.

Maatalii Okalik, head of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's National Inuit Youth Council, said Oct. 8 that youth acting out is not new, nor is it isolated to any one community or jurisdiction.

Anti-social behaviour is an understandable reaction when youth feel neglected, powerless and voiceless, she said, because they don't have the capacity to get attention any other way.

"I think youth are crying out for help in the way that makes sense to them, whether it's positive or negative," said Okalik.

"When a baby needs something, they cry and you try to figure out quickly what it is they need so you can alleviate their concerns and cater to them. With a lot of things happening across Inuit Nunangat with Inuit youth, they're doing the same thing. They're crying out for help."

Okalik was reacting to a cluster of youth crime lately including [arson in Iqaluit](#) and [Cape Dorset](#), mischief and [property damage in Taloyoak](#), a [gun incident](#) in Iqaluit and a group of young people in Kuujuaq who [harassed and assaulted a nanny](#) who was caring for toddlers at a local park.

That story out of Kuujuaq generated more than 50 comments on the *Nunatsiaq News* website, many of which were deleted for hateful content and cruel generalizations about the community and its residents. One commenter called the young offenders — all under age 12 — Neanderthals.

Okalik said she heard a lot of concerns from youth at the recent ITK [youth summit](#) in Iqaluit that their voices are not heard and that their needs are not being met.

So how do people address these cries for help?

Okalik said every adult who comes into contact with a child — coaches, teachers, family members, religious leaders, family friends, community members — should take the time to engage children when they can and give them a safe place to be children.

Often when they feel safe and are having fun — playing sports, say, or hunting and sewing with elders — the pain which children and teenagers might be feeling can come out in a healthy way.

They might feel lost or neglected because their parents are struggling with addiction, Okalik said. They might be victims of abuse or bullying. They might feel ashamed of their culture. They might be estranged from their grandparents because they don't speak Inuktitut.

But they have few opportunities to talk about those things, she said, so they act out, or worse — get depressed and turn to thoughts of suicide.

You only have to look at the alarming rate of Inuit suicide among youth see that northern societies are failing their children.

“It's recent in the media but it's been going on for a very long time. I just hope we can start to facilitate that conversation,” she said, by giving youth formal and informal opportunities to express their needs and desires.

Part of the problem, she said, is that many youth don't understand the impact of Nunavut's colonial history, especially the traumatic and ongoing results of residential schools abuse.

“There needs to be more awareness about that history, not only among Inuit families and communities but across Canada as well. Once people become more aware of those facts, they can raise strong families and stop negative cycles,” she said.

“I have a lot of hope for the future, I really do, but we have to talk about this.”

In that sense, youth need to be the focus, at all levels of government, she said. They need local arts programs, recreation and other healthy pastimes. They need attention from their parents and mentors.

Nunavut's new Representative for Children and Youth, Sherry Mulak-McNeil was unavailable for an interview Oct. 9 but she issued a statement via email that echoed much of what Okalik said.

“Even as a new office, it’s very clear to us that youth in the territory face many issues. We’ve already heard directly from youth about some of their big concerns: suicide, lack of community resources and cultural programming, poverty. These are big issues for a child to deal with. We must not lose sight of that,” Mulak-McNeil said.

“We must also not lose sight of the fact that young people will make mistakes and as adults it is our responsibility to support them through those mistakes. That support includes teaching them about accountability. It also includes friends, family and community reaching out to youth who they think might need help.”

She added that her office has resources to help support youth in Nunavut and encouraged youth and their guardians to come into the office and inquire about what is available.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674rash_of_inuit_youth_crime_a_sign_of_social_neglect_says_youth_leader/

Conference brings together aboriginal, legal communities

The StarPhoenix October 13, 2015

Supreme Court of Canada Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin, Assembly of First Nations Chief Perry Bellegarde and a host of others are due to speak in Saskatoon this week at an event bringing together the legal and aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal Peoples and the Law: We are Here to Stay runs Wednesday to Friday at the Delta Bessborough Hotel.

The conference is organized by the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice (CIAJ). It is partly a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which recently concluded after years of hearings and a final report. One of the report's recommendations was that law societies and law schools include more education on issues facing Inuit, Metis and First Nations peoples.

TRC head Murray Sinclair, Chief Justice of Saskatchewan Robert G. Richards, author and artist Maria Campbell, playwright and educator Yvette Nolan, Chief Tammy Cook-Searson of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band and Saskatoon Police Service Chief Clive Weighill are also on the agenda.

"Everyone in the justice system recognizes the need for a better understanding of the historical and cultural context within which Aboriginal peoples live and experience Canadian society," co-chair Justice Georgina Jackson of the Court of Appeal for Saskatchewan said in a news release.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/conference+brings+together+aboriginal+legal+communities/11432669/story.html>

Attack on Lillooet Bridge River Band leaves community 'in shock'

Suspect dead, 11 people sent to hospital after attack on Wednesday morning

[CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 14, 2015 2:04 PM PT Last Updated: Oct 14, 2015 11:23 PM PT



Lillooet Bridge River Band Chief Susan James says the community is in shock following the attack that left the suspect dead and 11 people injured. (CBC)

A small community in B.C.'s Interior is reeling after a young man allegedly attacked almost a dozen people in a band office, leaving the suspect dead and 11 people injured.

"Everyone's still in shock," said Xwisten (Bridge River Band) Chief Susan James. "We're a large family here. These people have worked together for years."

James said she felt "overwhelmed" with support from fellow band members and from across the province.

On Wednesday night band members gathered around a fire, drumming and singing, to prepare for the coroner to remove the suspect's body.



Bridge River Band members gathered around a fire on Wednesday night preparing for the release of the suspect's body from their community. (CBC)

Lillooet RCMP say the man entered the band office with weapons just before 8:30 a.m. PT. Wednesday and assaulted staff.

The Canadian Press reported that an emergency worker, who didn't want to be named, said the man apparently attacked one person with a hammer, and when others in the office went to help they were also beaten.

Police said when they got there, the man had already been "subdued and restrained."



Ten staff members of the Xwisten (Bridge River Indian Band) office have been hospitalized following an attack (The Canadian Press)

RCMP members arrested the man but were unable to transport him as he became unconscious and "unresponsive," police said in a written statement.

"RCMP officers immediately commenced CPR, which was continued by EHS who were staged nearby."

Police say the man was pronounced dead at the scene despite efforts to resuscitate him. British Columbia's independent police watchdog, the Independent Investigations Office of B.C. (IIO), has been called in to investigate the suspect's death.

11 people injured

There were initially differing reports of how many people were injured in the attack, but on Wednesday night B.C.'s Interior Health Authority said 11 people were treated for injuries. Two of them were in critical condition and were airlifted to hospital. One was in serious condition and two others suffered non-life-threatening injuries. The other six were released.

Lillooet is a town of about 2,300, located approximately 250 kilometres northeast of Vancouver in B.C.'s Interior.



Police are investigating the scene of the attack on the Bridge River Band near Lillooet, B.C. (CBC)

Band chief Susan James released first news of the attack earlier today in a written statement that initially reported four people injured, two of whom she said had been seriously hurt.

"A number of our office staff are being stabilized and transferred to other hospitals," James said in the release.

"Our attention now will be on the healing work we need to do. This tragedy has put our community into shock."

Witnesses told CBC News that they saw ambulances and a helicopter en route to the band office.

"As the police investigate, we will not comment on the details of the situation other than to say our prayers are with the families and the community," James said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/attack-band-lillooet-1.3271168>

Discussing law as it pertains to aboriginal people

By [Meaghan Craig](#) Reporter Global News, October 14, 2015 8:30 pm



SASKATOON – Is there a better role justice can play in the lives of First Nations people? That question is at the forefront of a three day conference being held at the Delta Bessborough in Saskatoon as leaders in the Canadian legal field say what we’re doing now, is simply not working.

Following opening remarks on Wednesday, Justice Murray Sinclair took the stage in front of the best and the brightest when it comes to the law. Nearly 300 people, including several judges and First Nations chiefs, gathered in one room to listen, learn and lead the country when it comes to aboriginal justice.

“It’s recognizing that aboriginal approaches to justice probably have better solutions for the people of those communities, not necessarily for everybody in society but at least for the people of those communities,” said Sinclair.

What they want is self-governance where each community gets to approach justice and correct behaviour as they see fit.

“It will require the legal profession and the legal system to be prepared to reconcile with those changes that are needed.”

The calls come in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada report. Sinclair also serves as one of its chairs.

“It begins by the way that we change the teaching of law in the law schools and for those who are currently practicing law it also calls upon us to ensure that the professional development programs that are in place by the law societies are also amended in order to reflect more of this understanding than has been the case to this point in time.”

According to data collected by the Government of Canada and outlined as background for aboriginal offenders, while aboriginal people made up about four per cent of the Canadian population by February 2013, approximately 23.2 per cent of all federal inmates were aboriginal.

The incarceration rate for aboriginal adults in Canada is estimated to be 10 times higher than the incarceration rate of non-aboriginal adults.

Between March 2010 and January 2013, the Prairies region of the Correctional Service of Canada accounted for 39.1 per cent of all new federal inmate growth. At the Saskatchewan Penitentiary, 63.9 per cent of the population was aboriginal.

“Sometimes incarceration needs to be done, needs to be the answer but often it isn’t.”

According to Sinclair, pre-sentencing reports for aboriginal offenders, while helpful to judges, are not a fix to the problem.

“Incarcerations are still excessively high, they’re not providing the solutions that we need,” added Sinclair. “I’m sure that many judges appreciate having them but what needs to be developed is a means by which the communities become engaged.”

Sinclair also challenges anyone critical of practices like sentencing circles to participate in one to see the type of impact they can have. In the case of a sentencing circle, it’s an added step available to aboriginal offenders.

At a point before a sentencing hearing, a ceremony is held where the offender meets with the victims of the offences, community representatives including elders and members of the justice system.

Sinclair says, often, when an accused has to face their community, addressing members and hearing others talk amongst themselves about you, this process can be much more difficult for the offender than going before a judge.

“Most people can go through an entire legal process from the time that they’re charged until they’re sentenced without saying a word and for many people that’s easy.”

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2277100/aboriginal-justice-cultural-education-front-and-centre-at-conference/>

Aboriginal Education & Youth

B.C. aboriginal grad rates climb high

By [Michael Mui](#), 24 Hours Vancouver

Thursday, October 8, 2015 3:36:50 PDT PM



Students from an aboriginal school perform a drum song during national Aboriginal Day festivities.
Postmedia Network

The success of aboriginal students in British Columbia in graduating on the first try after Grade 12 has improved significantly over the past 18 years, according to the government's statistics dating back to 1997, with Greater Victoria being one of the districts to see the most noticeable improvements.

In 2013/14, the most recent stats year available, 62% of First Nations students B.C.-wide graduated — 20% with honours — after the first crack at Grade 12, compared to 45% of students graduating on first try in 1996/97.

The number is even higher — at 72% graduation rate — when only students in standard schools are counted, since the lower total figure also accounts for alternative, continuing and distance education students.

The data is based on the experiences of thousands of students in B.C.'s school system — about 11% of students identify themselves as aboriginal — and shows a steady climb in outcomes over the years, suggesting what schools are doing is working.

In Greater Victoria, the first-time graduation rate has nearly doubled — in recent years reaching rates of 57-68%, compared to the 30-40% range in the '90s.

Nella Nelson, district aboriginal education co-ordinator in Victoria, said on Thursday that enhancing aboriginal outcomes became a district priority when it noticed the dismal rates in the past.

“Part of the aspect is recognizing ... the success of aboriginal education is the responsibility of the whole district, not just, for example, the aboriginal education division,” she said.

“Having resources that actually reflect aboriginal people, whether it's the legends (story telling) or DVDs now available. The use of story, the use of touch and the use of getting outside and on land on traditional territory — it's showing learning can happen in a variety of places.”

Teachers in her district, she said, are now regularly taking workshops to learn literacy and aboriginal content for their classes — the new B.C. curriculum is expected to expand even more to focus on aboriginal history.

Direct Link: <http://vancouver.24hrs.ca/2015/10/08/bc-aboriginal-grad-rates-climb-high>

Children in B.C. gov't care need more social workers now: advocate



Dirk Meissner, The Canadian Press

Published Thursday, October 8, 2015 12:04PM EDT

Last Updated Thursday, October 8, 2015 9:26PM EDT

VICTORIA -- Battered by a series of teen deaths and damning reports that say British Columbia's government is failing at protecting vulnerable children, the minister in charge said Thursday confronting tragedy is part of her job description.

Stephanie Cadieux acknowledged there have been government failures connected to working with children and families hurt by violence, neglect and poverty, but those missteps and their real-life consequences are not a result of her ministry's indifference.

"The ministry will always have really unfortunate things that happen," she said. "Really sad, really tragic. Sometimes we learn from those situations that perhaps could have been prevented. Sometimes they couldn't."



Friends say Alex Gervais, 18, killed himself at a Super 8 hotel where he'd been placed by the B.C. government after his group home was closed.

B.C.'s independent children's watchdog Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond said in a report Thursday that children and youth in government care are not being properly protected because of ministry underfunding.

Her report, *The Thin Front Line*, concluded the ministry needs to increase its budget by \$20 million in order to hire 250 more people, including 200 front-line social workers, just to make its social service duties functional.

"We need to add 250 positions immediately," she said at a news conference.

Turpel-Lafond said the government's position that it hired 110 new social workers in the past year doesn't add up because 91 social workers left government, leaving only 19 new people.

Cadieux maintained her ministry will meet its target of hiring 200 new social workers by January.

"I appreciate the representative would like to see a budget increase for this ministry of any size," said Cadieux. "The challenge is always to balance the demands of all the ministries and all of the real needs of the province with the dollars that are available. We would love to do more if we could."

Turpel-Lafond's report was released on the same day the B.C. Government and Services Employees Union issued its own review criticizing government support of social workers in aboriginal child service agencies.

The union's report, *Closing the Circle*, said the aboriginal child welfare system is culturally unsuitable, underfunded and understaffed.

Aboriginal leaders also demanded Thursday an independent investigation into the death of an aboriginal teenager in government care.

The First Nations Leadership Council sent a letter to Premier Christy Clark urging an immediate independent inquiry into the death of 18-year-old Alex Gervais.

Gervais fell to his death from a fourth-floor window of an Abbotsford hotel on Sept. 18. Turpel-Lafond has said it's believed he killed himself.

The a case review of Gervais's care has been launched, but the ministry has resisted calls for a public inquiry.

Opposition NDP Leader John Horgan has called for Cadieux to resign, describing her job as minister as "pathetic."

Horgan said the government appears unwilling to examine its failures, highlighting its refusal to review the circumstances of the death of 19-year-old Carly Fraser, who jumped to her death from the Lions Gate Bridge in December 2014.

Carly Fraser's mother, Lisa, said she received a letter from B.C.'s director of child welfare saying there would not be a review of the death because the teen was considered an adult. She died 20 hours after her 19th birthday.

Cadieux said in the legislature a review was underway to determine if proper policy was followed for the rejection, but she didn't say if a case review would be held into the teen's death.

Turpel-Lafond said \$20 million was a "small pittance" to pay to help children and families.

"If you invest it you can make a change," she said. "You have to get the kids supported."

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/children-in-b-c-gov-t-care-need-more-social-workers-now-advocate-1.2601165>

Manitoba child welfare system hiding behind privacy law: Nepinak

[CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 09, 2015 12:32 PM CT Last Updated: Oct 09, 2015 12:44 PM CT



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Grand Chief Derek Nepinak accused the provincial government of having too much control over CFS agencies that are supposed to be under First Nations' authority.

The head of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs says the provincial child welfare system is using privacy laws to avoid dealing with families who want to reunite.

Earlier this week, Manitoba's family advocate for First Nations, Cora Morgan, was asked to leave a meeting between a Child and Family Services (CFS) agency and a woman trying to get her children back.

Morgan was told it was because of privacy issues.

On Friday, AMC Grand Chief Derek Nepinak said confidentiality issues are giving rise to a blanket authority to deny anyone from knowing anything about how files are being treated.

"We're seeing an agency that's perhaps relying a little bit too heavily on legal opinions and bureaucracy to prevent families [from reaching] out to the family advocate, which is really too bad. The role of the advocate is as much for the family as it is to help the agencies with reunification of families," he said.

"[They] use this confidentiality clause to say, 'You know what, I don't have to talk to you anyway,' and they walk away from the table, which is very frustrating because it's not the way to return children back to their families.

"It's a convenient way of avoiding asking difficult questions and addressing difficult questions such as why, if a family has met all the criteria to have their child returned home, why isn't that child being returned home?"

There are currently more than 10,000 children in care in Manitoba, the vast majority — 90 per cent — are aboriginal.

The AMC created the Office of the First Nations Family Advocate and hired Morgan in June. Her role is to work with First Nations families dealing with Child and Family Services agencies.

Morgan has been working with a Winnipeg mother fighting to regain custody of her children. This week she publicly voiced her support for the woman, whose children have been in the care of CFS for two years.

Then on Thursday, Morgan said a CFS agency prevented her from taking part in a meeting between child welfare officials and the mother.

Province 'pulling all the strings' of CFS

On Friday, Nepinak accused the province of having too much control over the CFS agencies, which are supposed to be under First Nations' authority.

Starting in 2003, Manitoba's child-welfare agencies have undergone a "devolution" process that split family services into four new authorities — one each for aboriginal children in northern and southern areas of the province, one for Métis children, and a general authority for all others.

The change was aimed at creating a system in which First Nations people control the delivery of their own family services and was intended to help more kids remain with their families.

That's not happening, Nepinak said.

"The province is pulling all the strings. The [family services] minister is very much involved with ministerial directives that trickle right down to the front line workers in the entire system," he said, adding, "the province has been running our agencies and running our authorities, I believe, behind closed doors."

"The province has maintained this image of devolution ... when in fact they are completely controlling the system. We're completely shut out of the decision-making processes."

Nepinak said the government has never been transparent in how the devolution process was supposed to happen.

"They brought their own implementation committee together without even telling any of the First Nations organizations what they were doing."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-child-welfare-system-hiding-behind-privacy-law-nepinak-1.3264861>

U of S students look forward to Gordon Oakes-Red Bear Student Centre opening

Building will be new home for U of S Aboriginal Students' Centre

[CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 01, 2015 4:29 PM CT Last Updated: Sep 01, 2015 4:29 PM CT



Workers are putting the finishing touches on the Gordon Oakes-Red Bear Student Centre at the University of Saskatchewan. (University of Saskatchewan)

A soon-to-be-opened building on the University of Saskatchewan campus has indigenous students talking.

If everything goes according to plan, the Gordon Oakes-Red Bear Student Centre should be open by next month.

"It's going to be a pivotal moment in the history of this university," said Graeme Joseph, team leader of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Student Success at the University of Saskatchewan. "The aboriginal community in this province is younger and growing. What Gordon Oakes is going to be able to do is provide us with a platform to meet this increased need."

Recruiting and retaining indigenous students has become one of the university's chief goals. Advocates hope the centre will help achieve that.

"Students coming from either rural or urban communities, when they're coming to the university, it's a completely different culture," said Joseph. "And so that cultural divide can cause a lot of stress for students."

While the centre will be the new home for the Aboriginal Students' Centre, officials say the site will be for everyone.

"I really want more non-aboriginal students involved in the aboriginal students centre as well," said Indigenous Students' Union President Feather Pewapisconias. "I really want them to know that there are indigenous people on campus and how important it is that we recognize that we are on Treaty 6 territory."

The centre was designed by world famous architect Douglas Cardinal.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/u-of-s-students-look-forward-to-gordon-oakes-red-bear-student-centre-opening-1.3212010>

Shuswap First Nations to Take Legal Action for Care of Children



A Shuswap First Nations community is taking legal action against the Province of British Columbia.

Tuesday morning, the Province will be served with a Notice of Claim against their assertion of jurisdiction for Splat sin children.

“Enough is enough. We want our children back. We will not allow our children to suffer through the current failures of the B.C. child welfare system in this country,” said Chief of Splat sin First Nation Wayne Christian. “We’ve got the system that works. Why is B.C. not accepting this?”

At 12 p.m. Tuesday, an assembly of Splat sin members and supporters will gather at Premier Christy Clark’s Westside-Kelowna constituency office to symbolically serve the Notice of Claim.

“They say nobody has the answers and everybody across the nation is struggling with this. That isn’t our issue, our issue is with the Province’s assertion of their jurisdiction over our children,” Christian said.

October 13th marks the 35th anniversary of Splat sin First Nation initiating the unique Spallumcheen Indian Band By-Law #3-1980. Splat sin has been successfully caring for and protecting their children for 35 years according to Secwepemc law, according to a statement released Sunday.

Direct Link:

http://www.kamloopsbcnow.com/watercooler/news/news/Shuswap/15/10/11/Shuswap_First_Nations_to_Take_Legal_Action_for_Care_of_Children/

Overlooked tragedy of Quebec’s aboriginal young people

Their deaths go unnoticed. They do not make headlines. But a disproportionate 259 aboriginal children and youth have died violently or in unusual circumstances since 2000.



Rene Petiquay, 28, says he often had suicidal thoughts while growing up on Manawan reserve in northern Quebec. One day he walked through the streets with a noose around his neck before turning social services for help. The difficulties he faced are not uncommon for aboriginal children in Quebec, according a La Presse analysis of data.

By: Gabrielle Duchaine Caroline Touzin La Presse, Published on Mon Oct 12 2015

It is a tragedy nobody talks about. But 259 aboriginal children and youth have died violently or in unusual circumstances in Quebec since 2000, according to an investigation by La Presse

Suicides, accidents, illness, murders: the rate of suspicious deaths among young Inuit and First Nations people is almost three to four times higher than it is for Quebec youth in general.

Their deaths go unnoticed. They do not make headlines. However, the families of these young victims remain reeling for years.

During the past 15 years, 3,000 young Quebecers under the age of 19 have died in violent or suspicious circumstances. Of these, some 260 are aboriginal children — more than half of them Inuit — according to the La Presse investigation, which analyzed thousands of Quebec coroners' reports dealing with the deaths of minors and 18-year-olds since 2000.

This corresponds to roughly 9 per cent of suspicious deaths of all Quebec children and adolescents during this period. But aboriginal youth represent only 2.6 per cent of Quebecers in that age range.

The data for aboriginal youth shows their suicide rate is unusually high, as is their rate of sudden infant death syndrome, lung disorders, diseases and accidents of all kinds.

In 2012, Tessa Chachai-Petiquay, from Wemotaci, an Atikamekw reserve north of Shawinigan, suffocated between a couch and a mattress placed on the floor, on which she slept with her parents. She was 2 months old. The coroner denounced the wretched conditions of the family's rented housing.

The next year, Tukaq Amarualik was driving a snowmobile at a high speed through the northern village of Puvirnituk in Nunavik. The 17-year-old had been drinking. His friend,

Quinuajuak Mina, 15, was a passenger. Amarualik failed to negotiate a curve and slammed into a metal staircase. Both died instantly.

In 2009, Zachary Adams, 13, from Akwesasne Mohawk reserve southwest of Montreal, bought an AK-47 rifle. His father asked him to take it back to the gun seller — a friend of his brother — but the seller refused to return his money. Adams kept the rifle and ammunition hidden in his bedroom. One day the father scolded his son, who had been suspended from school for possession of marijuana. The teenager was locked in his room, where shot himself in the head.

The same year, Anna-Louisa Oginany, 13, of Lac-Simon, an Algonquin reserve in Abitibi, hanged herself with a nylon rope attached to a beam in her ceiling. Her cousin had committed suicide three months before. “I miss you so much and I cannot live without you,” wrote Anna-Louisa in a letter found in her computer.

Multiple causes

Suicide is the leading cause of violent death for those 18 and younger in Quebec’s aboriginal communities, the La Presse investigation reveals. According to the data, 102 teenagers have taken their own lives since 2000. The youngest was 11.

The data also reveals at least 73 avoidable fatalities, including fires, car or snowmobile accidents or drownings. In many cases, one of those involved was intoxicated or had been negligent.

This past summer an 8-month-old died in a house fire in the Inuit village of Puvirnituk. The police investigation concluded a cigarette caused the blaze. The fire chief confessed to the local newspaper that “nobody knew how to use the equipment” and called for urgent training for his men.

“In general, (indigenous communities) are much more likely to be poor, to live in substandard housing and have difficulty accessing health care,” says a report by the Canadian Paediatric Society on the First Nations, Inuit and Métis health.

Problems associated with remoteness or lack of resources, as in the case of the fire in Puvirnituk, are also responsible for dozens of deaths.

In 2011, for example, a 1-year-old boy died of septic shock on the plane carrying him to the hospital. Papigattuk Kadjulik had spent the night at the health centre in his Inuit village of Kangiqsujuak on the Ungava peninsula.

The medical team decided to transfer him by emergency air ambulance to the nearest hospital. He didn’t make it.

Like young Papigattuk, 70 babies died of suspicious causes before their first birthday, according to the data.

There have been cases of sudden infant death syndrome. Newborns, especially in the Far North, succumbed to lung infections that are hardly ever fatal in the south. Parents have crushed their children as they slept in the same bed.

Cry from the heart

“We struggle. Do Quebecers know that we struggle? Do they care?” asked Siasi Smiler Irqumia, the mayor of Inukjuak, a remote village of 1,600 on the eastern edge of Hudson Bay.

“It’s so frustrating to lose so many young people. Youth are our future. We try to make sure that our people are OK, that they do not suffer all the time. But we don’t have enough resources to heal our community.”

More and more aboriginal young people see parenthood as a way out of poverty. Leaders are sounding the alarm.

In Manawan, an Atikamekw reserve of 2,200 inhabitants in the Lanaudière region, there will be 85 births this year. The chief of the band council, Jean-Roch Ottawa, describes the baby boom as a ticking “time bomb.”

“Imagine all the new housing, health services, child care spaces, classrooms and teachers we will need if we do nothing,” says the former businessman. “In 10 years, it’ll be what: 120 pregnancies per year? Federal funding does not follow that boom.”

Chief Ottawa, himself a father, is concerned about the abilities of these young parents — sometimes as young as 13 or 14 — to care for their children.

There are similar concerns for the Inuit.

“Here, children are having children,” says Andy Moorhouse, corporate secretary for Makivik Corp., an organization mandated to protect the rights and interests of Inuit from Nunavik. “The average age for having a first child is 16 or 17 years. It’s rare for someone who is 20 to not be a parent.”

Moorhouse, a former mayor of Inukjuak, speaks from experience.

“I had my first at 17. I did not know how to raise a child. I was too young,” he admits. “Young people must understand that they are not obliged to have a child so young.”

In Canada, nearly a third of aboriginals are aged 14 and under, according to Statistics Canada figures. The proportion is even higher in Nunavik, where 40 per cent of Inuit are younger than 15. Thirteen per cent are under 4.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/10/12/overlooked-tragedy-of-quebecs-aboriginal-young-people.html>

Building understanding through education

KEVIN REED

Monday, October 12, 2015 7:52:36 EDT PM



Kevin Reed.

Across Kingston and surrounding area, students are learning about the histories and cultures of First Nations, Métis and Inuit. They may be listening to traditional stories, making a medicine pouch, learning about the dark history of residential schools, interpreting the Two Row Wampum, participating in a smudge or a sweat lodge, or reading novels, plays and articles by Aboriginal authors.

In the Limestone District School Board (LDSB), like other school boards in the province, we are trying to achieve the provincial mandate of teaching all students about the rich cultures and histories of Aboriginal peoples and trying to enhance the educational experience and outcomes of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.

Our board shares the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabek, and many students have that heritage, but Kingston draws people from across Canada and other First Nations, Métis and Inuit children attend our schools. Those cultures and their histories need to be reflected in our schools and classrooms.

In elementary schools, many teachers use the board-created curriculum document, Getting to Know Turtle Island, as a stepping stone to incorporating Aboriginal content. Activities could involve learning about the 13 moons, exploring Aboriginal heroes, researching the effect of climate change on the Inuit, reflecting on the Thanksgiving Address, or studying Métis fiddling and dancing.

Local Elders make visits to classrooms to provide richer experiences. They share teachings around language, history, crafts and ceremonies and provide an important link to the traditional teachings of Aboriginal peoples. We also have an Aboriginal Advisory Council to guide us as we move forward.

At high school, students can take courses in First Nation, Métis and Inuit Studies. These courses explore Aboriginal arts, literature, history and geography. Students also learn about Aboriginal topics in their mainstream history, English and geography courses, as well as other courses.

Our board also hosts the Katarokwi Aboriginal School. This secondary program, specifically for Aboriginal youth, is run in conjunction with the Métis Nation of Ontario. Each semester, the school offers four different integrated credits that incorporate traditional hands-on activities, when appropriate to the curriculum. So in addition to literacy and numeracy skills, the students have learned about nutrition, and fishing, and outdoor skills. They have also planted medicines, participated in sweat lodges, and skinned and tanned deer hides to make drums.

The LDSB also presents special events such as the Four Winds Student Conference and the Sharbot Lake Aboriginal Experience day. At these events, students hear teachings from local Elders and knowledge keepers. Next spring we are also planning to offer a student leadership conference that will focus on what it means to be Aboriginal in the 21st century.

We seek, whenever possible, to connect to activities and services in the wider community. So some of our students also participate in events at Queen's organized by the Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre, at the Métis Nation of Ontario, and at St. Lawrence College.

Justice Murray Sinclair, the Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, has said that educational systems have a huge role to play in bringing about reconciliation between Aboriginal and other Canadians. We agree and are working to correct misunderstandings, encourage cultural awareness, and promote equity.

One of the components of our strategy is determining if we are doing a good job of educating the First Nation, Métis and Inuit children in our schools. For this to happen, we need those students or their parents to formally self-identify as having Aboriginal heritage.

But many people, possibly because of the legacy of residential schools, appear to be reluctant to do so. So far, only 3 per cent of our students have formally self-identified although 12 per cent have done so informally on anonymous student surveys. Census data show that about 7 per cent of our students are Aboriginal. We will keep trying to earn the trust of those who have not self-identified.

Our goal is that all First Nation, Métis and Inuit students will feel that our schools are culturally safe spaces and will feel confident that they can safely and proudly self-identify. Only then will the reconciliation our nation needs become a reality.

Community engagement is one of three priority areas highlighted in the 2015 Vital Signs report by the Community Foundation for Kingston and Area. The report provides some context to engage the estimated 7,000 Aboriginal peoples residents as respected and visible partners in the Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington story.

Kevin Reed is an Aboriginal Education Consultant with the Limestone District School Board.

Direct Link: <http://www.thewhig.com/2015/10/12/building-understanding-through-education>

First Nations, school district sign Aboriginal education agreement



From left: Langley school trustee Rosemary Wallace, Laurie Brummitt, Cheryl Gabriel and Donna Robins attend the signing of the third Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement on Oct. 8. The ceremony took place in the Kwantlen Cultural Centre and included a feast, calling of witnesses, agreement signing, gift giving and traditional songs.

by [Monique Tamminga - Langley Times](#)

posted Oct 13, 2015 at 1:00 PM

In front of community leaders, First Nation chiefs and elders as well as Langley school district staff and trustees, the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement was signed last Thursday inside the new Kwantlen Cultural Centre.

Langley School District's agreement was the 111th to be signed in B.C.

According to Kwantlen First Nation members Donna Robins, who is also a Langley teacher, and Cheryl Gabriel, the new agreement is "awesome," but also one "not to be taken lightly."

The sisters were part of an Aboriginal advisory board, which spent more than a year working to create an agreement — a call to action designed to meet the educational needs of Aboriginal students.

The pair spoke to the Langley board of education at the Sept. 29 meeting inviting them to attend the historic signing.

In Langley, there are 1,850 Aboriginal students.

Michael Morgan, District Principal of Aboriginal Education, credits the dedication of the Aboriginal community and the advisory board for putting together an agreement the whole community can be proud of.

"We have received a tremendous amount of wisdom and guidance from our Aboriginal community," said Morgan. "A great many people have put a part of themselves into the creation of this important agreement. Next we must turn those beautiful words into meaningful actions for our students."

An EA is a working agreement between a school district, all local Aboriginal communities, and the Ministry of Education, designed to enhance the educational achievement of Aboriginal students. The previous five-year agreement had expired in Langley.

This is the first year that Aboriginal culture and history will be part of the curriculum across the province.

Direct Link: <http://www.langleytimes.com/news/332544922.html>

First Nations education funding should be boosted, leaders urge next federal government

Treaty 7 Education Conference speakers focus on funding gaps of schools

[CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 13, 2015 5:59 PM MT Last Updated: Oct 13, 2015 6:00 PM MT



Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the AFN, speaks at the Treaty 7 Education Conference in Calgary and called on First Nations to make themselves heard in the federal election on Oct. 19. (Evelyne Asselin/CBC)

With the federal election just days away, First Nations leaders are calling on whatever party might form the next government to increase education funding on reserves across the country.



Treaty 7 Grand Chief Charles Weasel Head said education is a key issue for aboriginal communities in the upcoming federal election. (Evelyne Asselin/CBC)

Speakers at the annual Treaty 7 Education Conference in Calgary on Tuesday, with about 600 education workers attending, kept circling back to the upcoming vote on Oct. 19 and the disparity in aboriginal education funding.

"The main priorities are on education and economic development and we want to see a party that begins to take a lead role with us in regards to closing the gap on these issues," said Charles Weasel Head, chief of Alberta's Blood Tribe and grand chief of Treaty 7.

"We can't afford to lose another generation," he added.

Weasel Head said First Nations communities are "immensely interested in which party forms government." He used the recent Alberta election as an example of the growing numbers of First Nations people who voted, and encouraging turnout in advance polls for the federal election.

"The last few years we haven't seen many of our files moving forward, especially in the area of education.... I think at this point in time our people are looking for change."

'There's a huge fiscal imbalance'

Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly First Nations (AFN), reiterated the importance of First Nations people getting out to vote.

"If we're going to get rid of poverty, then there's no better way than a good education and right now there's a huge fiscal imbalance — a gap that needs to be closed."



Alberta Education Minister David Eggen discusses the gap in education funding on reserves at the Treaty 7 Education Conference in Calgary. (Evelyne Asselin/CBC)

Alberta's Education Minister David Eggen also referred to funding disparity between schools on and off reserves.

"Funding has not been adequate by the federal government for a long, long time," he said.

Eggen said the Alberta government is serious about making improvements and "putting our money where our mouth is." Plans include pilot projects with school boards in close proximity to reserves to help better track students and improve curriculum.

"We know there is a general migration to urban areas, but students are taking with them lot of special education issues that they need to have satisfied wherever they go to school. (The ministry) is looking for ways to do a more accurate analysis of where people are and how they might be moving during the school year."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/treaty-7-education-conference-1.3269535>

First Nations Technology Council aims to help aboriginal people gain tech skills

by [Stephen Hui](#) on October 14th, 2015 at 10:59 AM



Denise Williams says computers can be transformative. Stephen Hui

Denise Williams says much attention is being paid to how First Nations people can get ready to work in British Columbia's emerging liquefied-natural-gas industry.

But the new executive director of the First Nations Technology Council (www.technologycouncil.ca/) told the *Georgia Straight* that a key goal of the West Vancouver-based organization is to see more aboriginal people gain the computer skills required to land jobs in the province's booming tech sector.

"What we're trying to focus on is this bigger long-term opportunity, because British Columbia's technology sector is the only one that sees growth every single year," Williams said during an interview at the HiVE coworking space in Vancouver. "There is a gap—a knowledge gap—that needs to be filled, and with so many First Nations people in British Columbia being on the young side of the demographic, there is a real opportunity there."

Williams, a 33-year-old member of the Cowichan Tribes community on Vancouver Island, assumed the top job at the FNTC three months ago after serving as its acting executive director for 10 months and its director of operations and business development for two years. The Vancouver resident previously worked for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and the independent First Nations Education Steering Committee.

Established by the First Nations Summit in 2002, the FNTC has a mandate to ensure that First Nations communities in the province have access to broadband Internet service, technical support, and assistance with choosing and implementing information-management systems. On September 28, it relaunched its First Nations in B.C. Knowledge Network portal (fnbc.info/), which facilitates the sharing of news, events, and resources among communities.

Back in 2008, only 85 of the 203 First Nations in B.C. had broadband Internet access. The current count is 190. According to the service plan released in February by the Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services, all First Nations are expected to have high-speed connectivity by 2017.

“Rural communities in B.C. are underserved in general, but First Nations communities are even more so underserved,” Williams said. “So the digital divide—I’ve heard it defined in a number of different ways, but I think right now there’s still a difference in access. There’s still a difference in priority.”

Tech companies such as Facebook, Hootsuite, Microsoft, and Slack have offices in Vancouver, which lies on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations.

However, Williams pointed out that aboriginal people remain underrepresented in the tech sector. Accordingly, she noted the “cornerstone” of the FNTC’s work is “capacity-building” with regard to the digital skills of First Nations people.

“I do strongly believe in technology’s ability to be transformative for an individual and for a community, and I’ve experienced it myself,” said Williams, who spent her early years on Haida Gwaii. “It’s a knowledge-based economy, so the more you know, the better. I think that technology provides us with a really incredible, really fast way to acquire knowledge.”

The FNTC has seven mobile computer labs that allow it to offer technical training in First Nations communities. Project Raven, a program that wrapped up in March, saw 2,269 unemployed and underemployed aboriginal adults in 62 communities complete digital-skills courses. After receiving training, 633 participants gained employment, according to the FNTC’s 2014-15 annual report.

In January, the council brought 20 First Nations students to a free HTML500 boot camp put on by Lighthouse Labs in Vancouver.

According to Williams, federal funding for the FNTC’s operations dried up a few years back. Since then, the council has downsized and adopted a “social enterprise” business model, which sees it offer training to organizations on a fee-for-service basis and selling advertisements on its web portal.

Williams said the FNTC is looking for funding to establish a Bridging to Technology program in partnership with the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology. The introductory program would offer industry-standard certification as well as postsecondary credits.

A June report prepared by B.C. Stats says the province’s tech sector employed 86,800 people and accounted for 4.4 percent of its workforce in 2013. According to [*Profile of the British Columbia High Technology Sector: 2014 Edition*](#), the industry boasted more employees than the mining, oil and gas, and forestry sectors combined.

“B.C.’s high tech sector continues to face challenges, such as a smaller domestic marketplace and an often tight labour market, which may give B.C. companies a competitive disadvantage, particularly with many of their American counterparts, but also with high tech firms in central Canada,” the report states.

Next week, Williams will graduate from Simon Fraser University with a master's degree in business administration. She asserted that increasing the representation of aboriginal people in the tech sector would benefit both First Nations communities and companies in the industry.

“I think that there are opportunities for First Nations people to be better connected and participating in this really lucrative, interesting, innovative field,” Williams said. “But there’s also an opportunity for the technology sector to have the insight of aboriginal people. This could, I think, really influence the trajectory of the technology sector, even, because aboriginal people have a unique way of seeing and a unique way of thinking about, especially, opportunities on their traditional territories in British Columbia.”

[Stephen Hui](#) is a freelance writer living in Vancouver. He is the former web editor and technology editor at the Georgia Straight. Follow him on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#).

Direct Link: <https://www.straight.com/life/555156/first-nations-technology-council-aims-help-aboriginal-people-gain-tech-skills>

Rupertsland Institute helps Metis students find way to success

By [Chris Eakin](#), Fairview Post

Wednesday, October 14, 2015 10:57:59 MDT AM



Rupertsland Institute's Northwest Trades Work Program 2015 students and staff pose for a photo with the program's rolling office and GPRC Fairview Campus in the back ground.

Ten Metis students completed the largest part of the Trades Work Program at GPRC Fairview College and are on to the final step – two weeks of work experience which will lead most of them to a job in the industry of their choice.

The 10-week program starts with one week in their home community with job-shadowing and on-line safety training, then they move on campus in Fairview.

The program has been running for 13 years and in that time many students have gone on to find not just jobs but success – one grad has become a master electrician, many others have achieved journeyman status.

Of last year's 11 students, 10 have jobs.

Some of those grads have come back to share their success stories with other students and their employers have as well.

Chris Laue, Dean of Trades for GPRC, said, "We (the college) are more than happy in supporting the program." Denise Carlson, co-ordinator for the program said from her point of view, "There is no nicer place to work than the college."

She explained part of her job as coordinator is to listen to the students and try to adapt the program to better fit them.

Last year's students wanted Saturday classes so they could get through material faster, this year's class said they would rather spend Saturdays with their families.

One of this year's students, Joel Gagnier, is hoping to become a heavy duty equipment technician and his ambition is to work as a mechanic at a truck dealership.

He likes the heavy duty program because you learn everything the regular automotive technicians do but there is a lot more to it with hydraulics and the like. "I like the whole mechanical side of things," he said.

He may have had a little extra encouragement to join the Trades Work program as his mother went through two years and is now happily employed as a parts person.

The program is run by Rupertsland Institute in cooperation with GPRC and has a mobile office.

The institute exists to help Metis students gain education and training and become more successful in life, so anywhere a student who identifies as a Metis is taking college, they can go to offer assistance – whether that be financial or advice and counseling.

Michelle McCullough is the manager. Lennie MacDonald the job development program assistant.

MacDonald said her job is mostly done on the telephone and over the computer and emphasized to students that employers will largely communicate with them via email, rather than texts.

She also told them if they have any problems during their work experience they should contact her immediately.

“Your work experience is very important,” she said, “ I will be phoning partway through the first week and at the end to check on progress made.”

She also told them she would be passing on information about any appropriate job openings to them, adding she spends a fair amount of time calling employers to get more information and to get an “in the door” for students.

She added she will be helping them with their job searches for three weeks after the end of their work experience.

Students will be eligible for a \$250 bonus from Rupertsland if they have a successful work experience (no missed days of work and a good report from the employer).

Direct Link: <http://www.fairviewpost.com/2015/10/14/rupertsland-institute-helps-metis-students-find-way-to-success>

Aboriginal Health

Nunavik conference trains record number in suicide prevention

"The special thing is that Inuit have made it happen"

SARAH ROGERS, October 09, 2015 - 4:00 pm



Valerie Lock, chairperson of the Regional Suicide Prevention Committee and Martha Inukpuk-Iqaluk a Suicide Prevention Liaison Worker in Nunavik, lead an ASIST workshop in Puvirnituq Oct. 8 as part of the Puttautiit conference. (PHOTO COURTESY OF NRBHSS)



About 60 Nunavimmiut completed ASIST training as part of the Puttautiit conference in Puvirnituq this week, the largest training session ever held in Nunavik. (PHOTO COURTESY OF NRBHSS)

Nunavik may be a region with some of the highest suicide rates in the country, but on Oct. 7, Nunavimmiut had a reason to smile.

That's when 60 people earned their Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) certificates, the largest-ever group in the region to receive that training at once, bringing the region's total number of ASIST-trained residents to 220 in the last two years.

But this wasn't just another training session; the workshop drew Nunavimmiut from every community to Puvirnituq this week as part of the region's first suicide prevention and healing conference, Puttautiit.

"We're all here for this conference so they're just really open to learning how to help someone who's at risk," said Valerie Lock, chairperson of the region's suicide prevention committee.

The conference was modeled after the annual "Dialogue for Life" conference that takes place in Montreal, a suicide prevention event focused on the indigenous peoples of Quebec and Labrador.

But this week's event, which began Oct. 5 and runs until Oct. 10, takes suicide prevention and healing in the region to another level, Lock said.

"Dialogue for Life is a great event," she said. "But this is home, and it's directly geared to Inuit."

"My hope is that we'll realize that it's okay to talk about suicide," she added, "and I really think participants are open and willing."

On Oct. 8 and Oct. 9, participants are taking part in different workshops, focused on cultural identity, and healing and grieving.

On the final day of the conference, Puttautiit will open the conference to its host community of Puvirnituq and host a well-being exhibition of all the support services available to people in the region, including crisis centres, men's support groups and youth programs.

The closing ceremony will feature a performance by singer and songwriter Jaaji Okpik.

The conference comes just weeks after [a special inquest held in Nunavut](#) last month to look at the territory's high rate of suicide, and specifically, the record-high 45 suicides recorded in the territory in 2013 alone.

The inquest produced 30 recommendations on how Nunavut should respond to its suicide crisis including a call to the Government of Nunavut to declare suicide a public health emergency.

While statistics for suicides in Nunavik are not as up to date, the region has recorded rates similar to or even higher than Nunavut over the last 15 years.

According to Quebec's coroner's office, 163 Nunavimmiut died by suicide between 2000 and 2011, making it the second-highest cause of death, just after cancer.

The coroner's office has yet to release regional suicide statistics from 2012 onward.

You can read more about suicide prevention efforts in Nunavik [here](#).

Health officials in Nunavik have said that Puttautiit will become an annual event in the region, with the goal of moving to a new community each year.

"My hope is that this will continue to grow," Lock said. "And the special thing is that Inuit have made it happen."

If you are in need of support or have thoughts of suicide, there are a number of toll-free numbers you can call to speak to someone:

- Kamatsiaqtut Help Line 1-800-265-3333 (Inuktitut, English)
- Residential school crisis line 1-866-925-4419 (Inuktitut, English, French)
- Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868
- 1-866-APPELLE in Quebec (French)

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavik_conference_trains_record-number_in_suicide_prevention/

Art pieces commemorate historic Aboriginal health-care agreement

by [Kelowna Capital News - Kelowna Capital News](#)

posted Oct 11, 2015 at 9:00 AM



One of the paintings is unveiled.

A special unveiling ceremony took place at Kelowna General Hospital (KGH), where three paintings by local Indigenous artists of the Syilx Nation were presented on behalf of the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA).

The paintings, commissioned by the ONA to commemorate a long standing effort of the ONA and Interior Health (IH) to foster a positive health partnership, will be displayed in Penticton Regional Hospital (PRH), KGH, and Vernon Jubilee Hospital (VJH).

The artists painted three beautiful and different works, representing the traditional and modern Syilx experience in the Okanagan territory.

PRH will host the painting titled *The Land Before Us* by artist Les Louis and will display the piece in the reception area of the main building. KGH will receive the painting titled *Piqa? – Digging Stick* by artist Sheldon Pierre Louis, which will be displayed in the main lobby of the Centennial building. VJH will display the painting titled *Star Blanket of Life* by artist David Wilson, which will hang in main lobby of the new Polson Tower.

The historic health partnership was signed between the ONA, the Tribal Council of the Okanagan people, and IH on June 13, 2012. The Letter of Understanding is a commitment by both partners to work together to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal people and to deliver appropriate and culturally safe health-care services which respect and value the first peoples of these lands.

Through continued collaboration, ONA and IH leaders are making strides towards reducing barriers and creating welcoming spaces for Aboriginal people accessing health services.

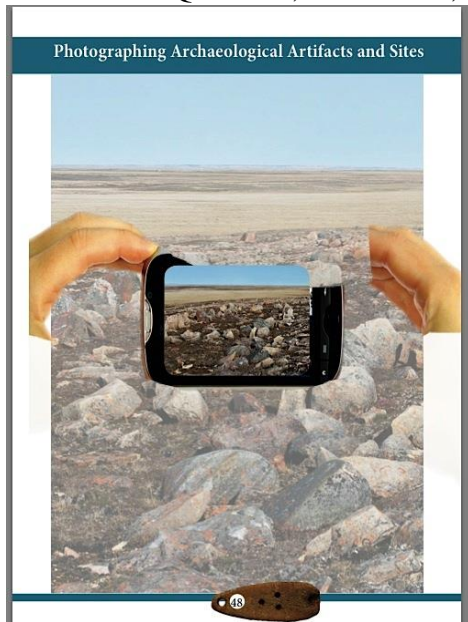
Direct Link: <http://www.kelownacapnews.com/news/331924951.html>

Aboriginal History & Heritage

Inuit Heritage Trust rolls out new booklets on archeology in Nunavut

Booklets aim to change misconceptions about archeology, archeologists

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, October 08, 2015 - 4:00 pm



You can learn more about how to use your cell phone to snap photos of archeological artifacts and sites — and lots of other things — in a series of new booklets available online at the Inuit Heritage Society website.

You're out on the land and you see a rock, which, when you pick it up, turns out to be a very old soapstone qulliq.

You take the stone lamp home where it sits on a shelf, but then you decide that you want to know more about its age and who made it.

But you can't exactly recall where you found the qulliq, so there are few clues to help you out.

Snow is now starting to blanket the North again, and these old objects, things people used in the past to stay warm, hunt, sew or feed their family, will soon be covered up.

But you can take some time out now and go online to read the new Inuit Heritage Trust booklets prepared for Nunavut residents and heritage workers, which you can download free online.

These IHT booklets, written for the organization by the Kitikmeot Heritage Society's executive director, Brendan Griebel, want to strike a balance between explaining why taking artifacts from the land should be discouraged and informing heritage workers and people who have these artifacts at home how to document where they came from and take care of them properly.

Written in easy-to-understand language, the booklets do state clearly that "the rules in Nunavut do not allow artifacts to be taken home when they are found."

But, you can take photos, even with a cell phone's camera, the booklets explain, among many other things.

The booklets show people what details of a site or artifact to photograph so that the information can be submitted to the IHT and its database. That means IHT can tell people about artifacts without having them physically removed from the land.

The booklets also want to change the misconceptions that many Nunavummiut have about archeology: they don't know what archaeologists do or what happens to artifacts when the items are removed during archaeological excavations.

This lack of knowledge has given root to "deep mistrust" for archeology and why archeologists dig up sites, Griebel says.

"Many informed me that Inuit have a moral responsibility to pick up artifacts on the land as a way of preventing non-Inuit from finding, taking, and owning them instead," Griebel said in a recent talk on the booklets to the Canadian Archeologists' Association, shared with *Nunatsiaq News*.

He's also heard stories about the strong market economy for Inuit artifacts and even photographs of archaeological sites.

"It is generally understood that non-Inuit profit extensively from both of these," Griebel said. "It should be pointed out that these beliefs do not just come from community members who have little exposure to archaeology, but also from Nunavut politicians, heritage organizations, and dignitaries."

To build more awareness about archeology, the final IHT booklet is built as a school curriculum for students in Grades 10 to 12.

It deals with questions regarding the work of archaeologists in Nunavut, rules and regulations for archaeological sites, how to become involved with archaeological projects, and also about academic and traditional Inuit knowledge of the Arctic's early history and people.

You can download all three booklets [here](#) or buy the booklets.

Inuktitut versions of these booklets will follow in summer 2016, the IHT website says.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit_heritage_trust_rolls_out_new_booklets_on_archeology_in_nunavut/

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

Idle No More co-founder launches First Nations housing campaign

Fundraising aimed at fixing reserve homes

[CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 11, 2015 8:25 AM CT Last Updated: Oct 11, 2015 8:25 AM CT



The group Idle No More has launched a campaign aimed at improving housing on reserves. This picture was taken by group co-founder Sylvia McAdam who was moved to take action based on what she saw visiting her home reserve. (Submitted by Sylvia McAdam)

Members of the advocacy group known as Idle No More have launched an initiative aimed at improving housing on First Nations reserves.

The campaign — called One House, Many Nations — was announced Wednesday. It aims to provide assistance to people living in desperate housing conditions.

"I was horrified to see the condition of many of the houses." - *Sylvia McAdam*

Sylvia McAdam, one of the co-founders of Idle No More, said she was moved to address the issue after seeing some of the housing on her home community, the Big River First Nation, which about 120 kilometres northwest of Prince Albert.

"You don't realize what is in your own backyard until you go door-to-door and actually go visit the people in their own homes," McAdam said.



Sylvia McAdam, one of the Saskatchewan-based founders of the Idle No More movement. (Madeline Kotzer/CBC)

"It is shameful that we're having to reach out [with an aid campaign] when we're living in one of the wealthiest countries in the world," she added.

The housing initiative is [seeking donations using a fundraising site called Indiegogo](#). With every \$15,000 raised a sustainable home can be built, according to the campaign. The site collects funds in U.S. dollars.

McAdam explained that she saw many homes in need of repair when she ran for chief of the reserve.

"I was horrified to see the condition of many of the houses and when the campaign ended and I didn't get elected, I had promised that I would at least meet some of the housing emergency [need for] repair or — if we raise enough — a house or a shelter for some of the families," she said.

McAdam said it was clear to her that many homes had not had any repairs done over the course of several years and, in some cases, decades.

"There were doors that needed replacing, windows that had been broken that needed to be replaced, walls that are broken," she said. "And there's an incredible amount of mould issues [and] some plumbing issues."

McAdam noted that First Nations treaties included promises related to housing.



Sylvia McAdam says she encountered many examples of poor housing while she was campaigning for chief of her home reserve. (Submitted by Sylvia McAdam)

"This is a treaty term — and promise for indigenous people — that shelter is one of the promises," she said. "It's a fundamental and foundational human rights issue. When you address shelter and housing, you address so many things. We're talking about mental health, the well-being of families and stability of families."

She added that federal politicians should address the issue as well.

"I'm calling out the colonial government — the settler government — to begin addressing the issue of homes, homelessness, and the treaty terms and promises to shelter," she said. "Those are the kind of things that need to be talked about because having a home is a fundamental human right."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/idle-no-more-saskatoon-oct-11-1.3266568>

Indigenous people in Ottawa want to reclaim Thanksgiving Day, Columbus Day

Seattle and Minneapolis renamed the American holiday Columbus Day as 'Indigenous Peoples' Day'

By Waubgeshig Rice, [CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 12, 2015 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Oct 12, 2015 5:00 AM ET



Drummers perform at the first "Indigenous Resistance Day" at the Odawa Native Friendship Centre in Ottawa on Oct. 10, 2015. (CBC Ottawa)

It's a movement in many American jurisdictions, and now people in Ottawa's indigenous community want to reclaim Thanksgiving Day — also known as Columbus Day in the United States — to honour the cultures that existed in the Americas long before the arrival of Christopher Columbus.

The Odawa Native Friendship Centre held an "Indigenous Resistance Day" on Saturday, with a potluck, film screenings, music, and discussions.

Celebrating 'resistance and resilience'

"It started off as kind of an anti-Columbus Day, but what we wanted to do was to have more relationships and dialogue with indigenous people from across Turtle Island, across the Americas," said Odawa president Christopher Wong.

'Thanksgiving's a traditional day for indigenous people as a celebration of harvest.' -
Odawa Native Friendship Centre president Christopher Wong

"People [like] our Mayan and Aztec brothers, indigenous people from up north, Cree, Ojibway, Haudenosaunee, and just get them celebrate our resistance and resilience for surviving the last 500 years together," he added.

U.S. cities like Seattle and Minneapolis have recently renamed the American holiday Columbus Day as "Indigenous Peoples' Day" to recognize the indigenous people that lived in the Americas at the time of Christopher Columbus's arrival in 1492, when he was credited for "discovering" the so-called "New World".

That holiday falls on the same day as Canada's Thanksgiving Day, and Wong believes it's a good opportunity for people on both sides of the border to recognize Indigenous cultures.

"Thanksgiving's a traditional day for indigenous people as a celebration of harvest," Wong said. "And we wanted to reclaim the harvest aspect of it."

Recognizing the cultures that historically thrived here before Columbus is important for Tito Medina, who's Maya-Mestizo and originally from Guatemala.



Morgan Hare (left) and Christopher Wong (middle) are part of the Odawa Native Friendship Centre. Tito Medina (right) came to Ottawa from Guatemala in 2003. (Waubgeshig Rice)

"We have over 25,000 years of building our culture," said Medina.

Medina, his wife, and their two young daughters came to Ottawa as refugees in 2003, and soon found a home among the city's indigenous community.

Medina regularly shares songs and stories from his culture at community events.

"We are so grateful that we developed these kinds of links, and then to learn about the situation of the First Nations people here," he said.

'Not about blaming each other'

Saturday's Odawa event brought together people from different indigenous and non-indigenous backgrounds. The hope was to start discussions about history and culture, in order to create a positive sense of community here in Ottawa.

"It's not about blaming each other, but we talk about dignity, respect, love, compassion," said Medina. "We need to know that after all these centuries, First Nations all across the continent have paid a big price in poverty, marginalization, genocide that is still happening."

Wong believes the weekend gathering — which he hopes to make an annual event — offers the perfect opportunity to share at an important time of the year.

"Coming together as a community, reestablishing family ties and relationships, and getting ready for the winter," he said. "In the same spirit, we want to invite all community members to come out and celebrate and prepare for the winter together."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/indigenous-people-in-ottawa-want-to-reclaim-thanksgiving-day-columbus-day-1.3264648>

Aboriginal Inequality & Poverty

Proposed tip line undermines shared struggles of Muslim, indigenous women

'The struggle of my Muslim sister is indeed woven to my struggle,' Tasha Spillett says

By Tasha Spillett, [for CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 10, 2015 4:02 PM ET Last Updated: Oct 14, 2015 1:37 PM ET



I see this tip line as a direct act of violence against our Muslim relatives but I also feel its threat,' says indigenous educator Tasha Spillett. (Patrick Doyle/Canadian Press)

When I heard the words "barbaric cultural practices" fall from the mouth of Conservative candidate Kellie Leitch late last week, I instinctively wanted to pick up the phone. Not to report on practices at variance with this narrow conception of "Canadian values," but because I felt a searing urgency to check-in with my sisters.

I felt a great need to speak with them; about how we might collectively keep our relatives safe from possible acts of hatred and violence incited by the racing, near-intractable fear-mongering that has saturated this federal election's landscape.

I'm accustomed to this sense of urgency. It is, in fact, the same urgency that permeates every march demanding justice for missing and murdered indigenous women and girls

(MMIWG), and which pulsates at every vigil commemorating a valued life gone too soon, stolen.

It is an urgency situated at the cultural and political intersection in Canada, where racism, classism and misogyny meet.

That said, it wasn't the women from my own indigenous community that drew my concern following Leitch's election broadcast. It was, instead, a grave worry for the well-being of my Muslim sisters, their families and their communities.

Our collective well-being has been threatened by an especially divisive use of language employed over and over again throughout this election — language that serves to further entrench polarizing narratives and lived realities of "us" and "them"; language that seeks to relegate the Islamic community further into the margins of "the other."

'More alike than different'

I see this "tip line" as a direct act of violence against our Muslim relatives but I also feel its threat. I hope indigenous people understand that "those" people are our people, because as Canadian history dictates, "them" also means us.

As a descendant of a people who, by Canadian colonial policy and practice, were (and are) forcibly required to live within the apartheid confines of the Indian Act, I have an intimate understanding of the potential dangers and menace encoded in words and phrases like "barbaric cultural practices."

Given this, it is particularly alarming to witness the re-articulation of the same ideologies that birthed Canadian genocidal practices and policies against Indigenous Peoples, made manifest in our present-day federal election.

It is within our recent memory that indigenous ceremonial practices were outlawed and made the target of assimilationist policies, resulting in what [Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has identified as a cultural genocide](#). And yet despite the lasting impacts of these historical (and contemporary) offensives against Indigenous Peoples' cultural fabrics, we are very much experiencing a cultural reawakening.

Now, more than ever, Indigenous Peoples are finding their way home to ceremony lodges and reclaiming their identities, and in doing so interrupting the colonial legacy.

When I look at the ceremonial markings on my own body, I see love, strength and faith. I see no barbarism, I see only beauty.

From developments this week, I fully understand how the sovereignty I have over my body, and the ability I have to be part of a ceremony in which I honour my cultural identity, could be seen as a barbaric act — but only as defined by our current federal

government. Consequently, the people who I share my ancestral territory with could, out of fear and lack of understanding, report my participation in this ceremony to the RCMP.

In the end, while a great show of Conservative election forces have been designed to divide us and to entrench fear of "the other," we must resolve to always connect, to eschew hatred and to acknowledge a truth far too unarticulated in this campaign: that we are more alike than we are different.

In recognition of this truth, the struggle of my Muslim sister is indeed woven to my struggle. Anything which serves to undermine this certainty is the ultimate "barbaric cultural practice."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/proposed-tip-line-undermines-shared-struggles-of-muslim-indigenous-women-1.3263626>

Aboriginal Politics

Doug George-Kanentiio: Aboriginal people must be involved in Canadian politics

[Doug George-Kanentiio](#)

Published on: October 9, 2015 | Last Updated: October 9, 2015 11:22 AM EDT



The Mohawk and Five Nations flags fly outside the former site of a Canadian border post in the middle of Akwesasne Mohawk reserve, photographed Wednesday, July 28, 2010. Aaron Lynett / (Aaron Lynett / National Post)

Many Native people believe the federal elections mean little or nothing to them, that no matter the promises and gilded speeches, meaningful changes are impossible.

Others, such as my fellow Mohawks and other members of their respective Iroquois communities, argue that to take an active part in the Canadian political process is to compromise our standing as independent peoples and that formal treaty status is incompatible with citizenship; a nation cannot make treaties with its own people.

In this regard they are right. The American experience has been the whittling away of Aboriginal sovereignty. From the enforcing of U.S. federal and state criminal laws on Indian territories to the National Indian Gaming Act, there has been a decided, some would say fatal, move away from sovereignty to a status resembling that of local municipalities.

Among our own Iroquois people, the same contrasts exist between what we advocate and the reality of our social, legal and political lives. We do have a strong, vibrant culture but we also live in a time of historical challenges and nowhere is that more apparent than on my home community of Akwesasne, the capital (as we say the central fire) of the Mohawk Nation.

Our lands have been arbitrarily divided between Canada and the U.S. with attendant state and provincial sections. This along with a dozen alien police agencies, competing legal systems and three Native governing agencies, two of which were imposed upon Akwesasne at force of arms by officials in Ottawa and Albany while the third, the Mohawk Nation Council, has no financial resources to respond to the needs of its citizens.

We are therefore deeply affected by what the Canadian electorate decides and must have our voices heard in whatever forum presents itself if we are to remove the international border and rid ourselves of the colonial band-tribal council systems.

This does not mean we must cast ballots but we must be actively engaged if we are to lessen the burdens which have crippled us with every negative measure of social behaviour and physical health.

In the past our Iroquois leaders were masters of the political processes of not only our nations but those of the Europeans. We made it our business to understand how the immigrants thought and by which manner were they governed. We took a very active role in the affairs of the colonies. We also pressed for the colonial leaders to study our governance and thereby secure greater freedom for their own.

At the famous Lancaster, Pennsylvania treaty conference in 1744 the Onondaga leader Canassatego admonished the English colonies for their lack of unity and offered the Iroquois Confederacy as an example of freedom and stability. In 1754, at the Albany Unity Conference, the Mohawk leader Tiyanoga (Hendricks) also offered the Confederacy as a model for the colonies. Both speeches [influenced Ben Franklin](#), who cited the Iroquois as a tangible example for colonial unification.

It was our active participation in the politics of that era which resulted in the Royal Proclamation of 1763, that edict which set in motion all formal treaty procedures between Native nations, Great Britain, the United States and Canada.

It is also true that in the spring of 1776 an Iroquois delegation was present in Philadelphia to advise the rebels as to Aboriginal relations and once again to offer the Confederacy as an entity whose powers are defined by a constitution with the rights of its citizens to specific freedoms and complete emancipation set into law.

In more recent times we have also sought to actively change Canadian policies and to secure our aboriginal rights. The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was largely passed because the Iroquois Confederacy was at the UN pressing hard for its passage. While Canada and the U.S. have been among the most reluctant of signatories the enactment of the declaration into federal law will only happen if we press each one of the national parties commits to its passage.

We have to influence the policy makers and the ministers. We must have the ear of the next prime minister. We have to make our voices heard by using our diplomatic skills and our ability to come to terms: not to make fatal compromises in our standing as aboriginal nations but to draft and enact those laws and regulations which are within our means to change.

Doug George-Kanentiio, Akwesasne Mohawk, is the former editor of the journal Akwesasne Notes, a co-founder of the Native American Journalists Association and the vice-president for the Hiawatha Institute for Indigenous Knowledge.

Direct Link: <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/politics/doug-george-kanentiio-aboriginal-people-must-be-involved-in-canadian-politics>

AFN National Chief Bellegarde backs NDP's Indigenous issues platform

[National News](#), [Uncategorized](#) | October 8, 2015 by [APTN National News](#)



APTN National News

ENOCH CREE NATION, Alta.—Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde is backing the NDP's Indigenous issues platform saying it “addresses many of our key priorities.”

Bellegarde issued the statement Thursday morning.

“The NDP platform is a comprehensive response to our ‘closing the gap’ agenda,” said Bellegarde. “It addresses many of our key priorities and commits to high level engagement to work together to close the gap.”

An AFN official said Bellegarde's support for the NDP's platform is not an official endorsement of the party.

Mulcair unveiled his party's platform on Indigenous issues Wednesday during an AFN hosted forum in Enoch, Alta. The AFN invited all federal party leaders to the event, but Mulcair was the only one to show up.

Mulcair announced an NDP government would invest \$1.8 billion over four years into core K-12 First Nation education which would grow to \$4.8 billion over eight years.

Bellegarde's statement praised the NDP's platform for its promises to create a cabinet committee on Indigenous issues, call an inquiry into murdered and missing Indigenous women in 100 days and invest \$68 million in Indigenous languages.

“We hold up all federal parties and party leaders that truly listen to First Nations and reflect our concerns,” said AFN National Chief Bellegarde. “First Nations priorities are Canada's priorities and I am pleased that yet another party is responding to our agenda.”

This is the first time in the election where Bellegarde has singled out a party for their platform on Indigenous issues.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/10/08/afn-national-chief-bellegarde-backs-ndps-indigenous-issues-platform/>

Cuthand: Election could be key for First Nations' progress

By Doug Cuthand, The StarPhoenix October 9, 2015



Doug Cuthand

First Nations issues have been conspicuously absent from the federal election campaign.

While the discussion and debate that should surround this important issue are missing, both the Liberal and NDP leaders have made some significant statements.

A so-called dog whistle statement came from the NDP when it stated that the party would work with First Nations on a nation-to-nation basis. This sentiment was echoed by Liberal candidate Judy Wilson Raybould in a CBC interview. Such a commitment means a lot in Indian Country, but it went largely unnoticed in the rest of Canada. However, it could be a policy that attracts First Nations voters.

Meanwhile, the Conservatives have stuck to a pedestrian list of minor funding increases and a program to develop land management laws for reserve land.

This election could be a watershed event for First Nations and Métis voters. There's a record number of aboriginal candidates running, and they're not merely names on paper in ridings where their parties have little chance.

There are 54 aboriginal candidates running for four parties. The NDP has the most with 22 candidates, followed by the Liberals with 18. The Greens have nine and the Conservatives five.

Both the Liberals and NDP have actively recruited aboriginal candidates. The Liberals, in particular, have recruited star candidates such as Raybould, the former British Columbia regional chief for the Assembly of First Nations, Michelle Audette, the former head of the Native Women's Association of Canada, and Lawrence Joseph, former chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

The NDP has concentrated on strong local leaders such as Georgina Jolibois, the former mayor of La Loche, Melissa Atkinson, a lawyer and former chair of the Yukon Human Rights Commission, and Romeo Saganash, the former deputy grand chief of the Grand Council of the Crees and vice-chair of the Cree Regional Authority.

The Conservative candidates include Leona Aglukkaq, who served as environment minister, Rob Clarke, a former member of the RCMP, and Peter Penashue, former grand chief of the Innu Nation.

In addition to the august group running for office, there is increasing interest among aboriginal people in voting this time.

By now it's a cliché to state that Indians don't vote. However, the dismal record of the Harper government and the activism of Idle No More have combined to create a perfect storm where our people want a voice and campaigns are under way to get out the vote.

While the AFN says 51 Tory seats are vulnerable and the First Nations vote could make the difference, this statement lacks credibility. For example, Battlefords Lloydminster has 20 per cent aboriginal voters, placing it in the country's top 10. However, Gerry Ritz has that seat sowed up.

Our people should get out and vote to show candidates and incumbents alike that

we care and have clout. This way we won't be ignored and left out of the national discussion.

Meanwhile, the idea of initiating a nation-to-nation relationship between the First Nations and the federal government is a breakthrough. The biggest impediment to our progress is the unsatisfactory relationship between the government and First Nations - a situation has gone on for decades and spans governments and political parties.

Ottawa has taken a colonial approach to First Nations from the beginning. Now that our rights are enshrined in the Constitution and the courts have begun to define them, we cannot be ruled by a colonial administration.

The Conservatives have treated us as adversaries. Instead of recognizing our legitimate rights and leadership structure, they have chosen to play games with public relations rather than address the issues.

The aboriginal population is the fastest growing in Canada. It's young, becoming well educated, and growing in wealth. We are at a tipping point in history. Once the march to independence begins, it is impossible to stop. In a way, First Nations' history mirrors that of Quebec. We have had our skirmishes and unrest. We also have had a quiet revolution. Now, whichever government is standing tall at the end of the day will have to step up to recognize our rights, create a nation-tonation relationship, respect the honour of the Crown and address a disgraceful situation that gives Canada a black eye internationally.

We can't go back. This election could be the turning point.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/cuthand+election+could+first+nations+progress/11426194/story.html>

First Nations leaders hold rally in Montreal to get attention of political parties

Aboriginal leaders say it's past time their communities' issues are discussed in the campaign

[CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 09, 2015 5:55 PM ET Last Updated: Oct 09, 2015 5:55 PM ET



"We're an afterthought. That has to stop," says AFNQL Chief Ghislain Picard. (CBC)

About 100 people gathered in downtown Montreal Friday afternoon to call on federal party leaders to address and discuss aboriginal issues during this election campaign.

"It's a little shameful from the parties running [in] the campaign that no one has talked about indigenous issues...We should be ashamed of the situation because we are not treating indigenous people with respect," said a woman at the rally, Émilie Joly.



About 100 people attended a rally Friday afternoon in downtown Montreal calling on election candidates to address indigenous issues. (CBC)

First Nations leaders say the issues affecting their communities have been completely overlooked by all the parties in the race.

"We are part of this country — we have been here for a very long time. As we move closer to the election, the voters need to hopefully take a better look at what the parties have to offer when we take a look at First Nation issues in this country," said Akwesasne Grand Chief Abram Benedict.

First Nations leaders at the rally said it's time to tackle issues such as improving access to schools, health care, better living conditions, settling territorial disputes and strengthening the communities' partnership with Ottawa.

"We need to be heard. Once the election is done with, we're an afterthought. That has to stop," said Ghislain Picard, Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador.

"What we need to have is a party or government that is willing to sit down and prepare a plan with us."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/first-nations-leaders-hold-rally-in-montreal-to-get-attention-of-political-parties-1.3265676>

First Nation group calls for Zimmer's resignation

Jonny WAKEFIELD / Prince George Citizen
October 9, 2015 09:09 PM



Prince George-Peace River-Northern Rockies Conservative incumbent Bob Zimmer. Citizen photo by Brent Braaten Oct 8 2015 - Brent Braaten, Photographer

The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) is calling on Conservative candidate Bob Zimmer to resign over controversial remarks on missing and murdered aboriginal women.

In a release, the UBCIC called Zimmer's comments "derogatory," as well as "blatantly sexist and racist."

Zimmer was campaigning in Mackenzie on Friday and was not immediately available for comment.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip said his organization has received calls from people concerned about the comments, which came in response to a question on missing and murdered aboriginal women at an Alaska Highway News debate in Fort St. John Tuesday.

"They found the comments to be very sexist, very offensive, and demanded we put out a statement," he told Alaska Highway News.

Zimmer said he would support an inquiry on missing and murdered women if he believed it "would save one life." However, he said he believes the issue has been studied enough.

"I think the key is that we respond to it," he said Tuesday.

"One of the major drivers of missing and murdered aboriginal women is lack of economic activity or simply put, a lack of a job," adding that his government is working to bring economic opportunity to reserves.

"Ultimately, when people have a job they're not in despair and they can stay on reserve and that's where we want them to be, we want them to be happy where they live and go from there with their families."

Kathi Dickie, the NDP candidate and a former Fort Nelson First Nation chief, said she was "flabbergasted" by the remarks at Tuesday's debate.

"Almost 1,200 women murdered because they didn't have a job? And they wouldn't stay on reserve?" she said.

While some said Zimmer's comments appeared to blame aboriginal women and suggest they remain on reserve, the conservative incumbent said his remarks were taken out of context and that he was referring to promoting economic activity.

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/first-nation-group-calls-for-zimmer-s-resignation-1.2082596#sthash.HKWkwql8.dpuf>

Federal candidates answer to Enoch Cree Nation

By [Karen Haynes](#), Spruce Grove Examiner/Stony Plain Reporter

Friday, October 9, 2015 3:40:18 MDT PM



From left: Brendon Greene (Green Party) and Guy Desforbes (NDP), both candidates for the Sturgeon River-Parkland riding in the 2015 federal election, spoke with band members of Enoch Cree Nation on Oct. 5.

On Oct. 5, roughly 30 people — mostly band members of Enoch Cree Nation — gathered at the recreation centre on the reserve to speak with candidates from the Sturgeon River-Parkland riding in advance of the 2015 federal election.

Of the five candidates on the ballot, only Brendon Greene (Green Party) and Guy Desforbes (NDP) attended the candidate forum.

Ernest Chauvet (Christian Heritage Party), Rona Ambrose (Progressive Conservative Party) and Travis Dueck (Liberal Party) did not attend.

The forum was an opportunity for members of the Aboriginal community within the riding to speak to the candidates about issues that directly relate and impact their lives, their families and the supports they receive on reserve.

Summarized here is a brief selection of the questions posed by members of the public and responses given by the candidates who participated in the forum.

How can we keep our children at home when Human Services step in and take them into the foster care system?

Greene: I think you would be better off if there was some sort of arbitration process or panel. It's tough when there are proponents on the other side who say Human Services know best. But they don't know your story, your situation and what might be best for your children all the time. A kid living without their parent is huge and can cause a lot of trauma. I think having third party arbitration ... would be one step towards solving the problem.

What actions do think the federal government must take to strengthen First Nations families and communities?

Greene: The Green Party is dedicated to working with the First Nations and opening an inquiry into the missing and murdered Aboriginal women and amending the Indian Act. We want the reconciliation to start the day after the election. We need a First

Nations Health Plan and we need a plan to address poverty and education. The Green Party pledges \$800 million towards First Nations education, safe drinking water and improved communities, \$2 billion towards abolishing post-secondary tuition by 2020, \$400 million to establish an affordable housing strategy, \$700 million for a healthy foods program and \$500 million to invest in early childhood education

What is your understanding of the treaty relationship?

Desforges: I'd have to do my research on that, which is fine because this (referring to the forum discussion) is educational. Being a French guy, I'm all about keeping traditions. Being asked (abandon traditions), I'm not game on that.

What actions do think the federal government must take to strengthen First Nations families and communities?

Desforges: Under the NDP platform we are following what the First Nations have asked for. Something that is dear to my heart that we've been talking about is the missing and murdered indigenous women. We will get that taken care of and get something started within the first 100 days of making government. We will engage in a collaborative process and develop with First Nations a national action plan to address the root causes of violence experienced by First Nations women and girls. We definitely have a plan in place to take care of, I would say, just about every issue that has been brought to the table.

Direct Link: <http://www.sprucegroveexaminer.com/2015/10/09/federal-candidates-answer-to-enoch-cree-nation>

Editorial: Aboriginal issues have received too little attention in the election campaign

[Montreal Gazette Editorial Board](#)

Published on: October 9, 2015 | Last Updated: October 9, 2015 6:54 PM EDT



Members of the aboriginal community march on Ste. Catherine St. in Montreal on Friday, October 9, 2015.
Peter McCabe / MONTREAL GAZETTE

If we've heard far too much about the niqab in the current federal election campaign, what we've heard far too little about are the fundamental and urgent issues involving aboriginal people in this country.

Through the five televised leaders' debates, these barely surfaced, in no small part because of the debate organizers' choice of questions. The absence was glaring. By the final French-language debate, all of the participating leaders except Stephen Harper of the Conservatives at least took it upon themselves to insert at least some mention of aboriginal concerns, but there was no depth or discussion.

It's only now, with advance polls already open and little more than a week to go before election day Oct. 19, that the party leaders increasingly are addressing those issues, which include the scandalous shortage of proper housing and clean water in many communities, underspending on education for aboriginals and the high number of missing and murdered indigenous women.

On Wednesday, NDP Leader Tom Mulcair unveiled the indigenous plank of his party's platform, pledging a "nation-to-nation" relationship with aboriginal peoples and big spending, concerning education in particular. On Monday, Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau said he would devote part of his proposed infrastructure spending to providing clean drinking water to the 93 communities subject to Health Canada boil-water advisories, some for decades. While the ambitious nature of those spending initiatives might give rise to skepticism about their fulfilment, at least those parties are signalling that these urgent problems are priorities. As well, both parties are committed to holding an inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women, something that would focus our attention on this continuing and multi-faceted issue. The Harper government has staunchly rejected an inquiry as unnecessary.

One byproduct of the difficult relations that the Harper government has had with aboriginals is that more of them than ever are expected to vote in this election. Very few Mohawks will be among them, in keeping with their rejection of anything that would

seem to acknowledge Canadian sovereignty over their territory. But many others are heeding Assembly of First Nations national chief Perry Bellegarde's call for participation; the more aboriginals who become voters, the more that national politicians will need to pay attention to their views.

But aboriginal issues should not be of interest only to aboriginals, any more than women's issues should be of interest only to women. These are crucial matters for our society as a whole, and addressing them in a just and effective manner is vitally important to the future of this nation.

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-aboriginal-issues-have-received-too-little-attention-in-the-election-campaign>

Obama organizer calls aboriginal voters in Canada a 'force to be reckoned with'



Cara Currie Hall, third from left, during a presidential visit to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. (Courtesy Cara Currie Hall)

Cara Currie Hall played a key role in organizing the indigenous vote for presidential candidate Barack Obama. Now she's back in Canada, helping to promote local Rock the Indigenous Vote campaigns.

Asked what role indigenous people could play in the upcoming federal election, she described aboriginal voters as a "sleeping giant" and a "force to be reckoned with."

"They've never been really expected to vote, and probably aren't considered in any of the polls that are being done. We have the ability to swing this."

Currie Hall grew up in a politically active family. Born and raised in Maskwacis, Alta., her father was chief of the Montana First Nation, as was his father before that.

In 2007, while living in North Dakota, she took the leap into politics herself.

Currie Hall began organizing the indigenous vote for presidential candidate Barack Obama after receiving a phone call from Cherokee lawyer and U.S. Ambassador Keith Harper. According to Currie Hall, Harper told her "we're going to do a push in Indian Country... can you help me?"



Currie Hall's daughter, Faith, shakes President Barack Obama's hand during a 2014 event. (Courtesy Cara Currie Hall)

It didn't take long for Currie Hall and other members of the U.S. Indigenous Rock the Vote campaign to be swayed by Obama's message.

'[Obama] didn't just hear us. He acted. He's a man of colour that could relate to us. He has a clear and a broad understanding of the difficulties we've had as a people.' - *Cara Currie Hall*

Obama, elected in 2008, garnered endorsements from Native American organizations and the support of many indigenous voters.

Currie Hall said that the president's relationship with First Peoples continues to be excellent.

"We weren't just a blip in a speech, he followed through," she said. "We've seen such advancements and attention paid to indigenous issues by this president."

Although she still lives state-side, Currie Hall said she didn't think twice about coming home to encourage the vote.

"The relationship is broken between Canada and the first people," Hall explained. "We need to correct it today. We need to correct it now to make Canada stronger."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/the-power-of-the-indigenous-vote-a-potential-political-game-changer-1.3263046/obama-organizer-calls-aboriginal-voters-in-canada-a-force-to-be-reckoned-with-1.3265245>

Aboriginals march downtown to put election spotlight on First Nations issues

[Christopher Curtis, Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: October 9, 2015 | Last Updated: October 9, 2015 10:52 PM EDT

Hundreds of indigenous marchers gathered at Cabot Square Friday in hopes of pushing First Nations issues into the minds of voters before the Oct. 19 federal election.

Cheryl Tenasco, 49, brought her 13-year-old daughter to the demonstration, and says she'll cast a ballot for the first time in her life when the polls open. Tenasco says she's marching to demand an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada — a campaign promise levelled by each major political party but the Conservatives, who argue it's a criminal matter being investigated by the RCMP.

"My daughter is only 13, but I worry that every time she leaves our home, that will be the last time I see her," said Tenasco. "This feeling is going to be there for the rest of my life."

In Tenasco's hometown of Kitigan-Zibi, north of Gatineau, young girls grow up hearing the story of Maisy Odjick and Shannon Alexander. Seven years ago, the two teenage girls went missing on a night they were last seen walking to a local dance. There are still no answers about what happened to the girls, and the mystery surrounding their disappearance has haunted the Algonquin territory every since.

"I've known about them for most of my life. It's this traumatic thing and I'm afraid it will happen to me," said Mia, Tenasco's daughter. "I never truly feel like I'm safe."

Some studies suggest indigenous women are eight times more likely to be murdered than non-indigenous women. But despite the sense of alarm that reverberates through Canada's 600 First Nations communities, the parties have largely been silent on the issue through the campaign.

There are, of course, a litany of other issues facing First Nations — almost 15 per cent of Canada's reserves don't have access to clean drinking water and 40 per cent of indigenous children live below the poverty line. But for many, the public inquiry is the most pressing concern.

"I've said many times to the Conservative Government ... the purpose of me pushing or believing in this inquiry is not to blame you," said Michèle Audette, the former president of Native Women's Association of Canada and a Liberal candidate in Terrebonne. "It's to find how we can reconnect, how we can start working together again to rebuild this broken relationship. We all have flaws, even in our communities, but we have to do something."

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/national/aboriginals-march-downtown-to-put-election-spotlight-on-first-nations-issues>

Why First Nations might vote this time around

Aboriginal reluctance to participate in federal elections is easily understandable when you look at the candidates for prime minister – all white, privileged and male – but exciting things are afoot in #elxn42

by [Drew Hayden Taylor](#)

October 11, 2015, 8:00 AM

Drew Hayden Taylor's play Spirit Horse has become the subject of a formal complaint over its use of the term "squaw."

There's a lot of talk in the media about the reluctance of Muslims and other ethnic minorities to vote in Canadian national elections. The same can be said for this country's First Nations people.

Voter turnout among aboriginals is lower than among non-aboriginals. Even the national chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Perry Bellegarde, has admitted to never having voted in a federal election. Ironically, Chief Bellegarde is urging native people to go out and vote in this election, to be part of this country's democratic practice, a very public instance of "Do as I say, not as I do."

But that's okay. Only 330 or so chiefs can vote in AFN elections, an organization that claims to represent the vast multitudes of on-reserve native people stretching from ocean to ocean to ocean... but I digress.

Aboriginal reluctance to participate in this democratic exercise every four or five years is easily understandable when you look at the candidates for prime minister – all white, privileged and male, although Elizabeth May is only two out of three of these, which ain't bad.

For many indigenous people, voting is like shopping for white bread. It might be enriched but, really, does that make it any healthier?

This time around, though, exciting things are afoot aboriginally speaking. In at least 50 ridings across the country, native people could hold the swing vote. On top of that, there are 53 candidates running for office who identify as aboriginal, Métis or Inuit: four are running for the Conservatives, eight are Green Party, 18 Liberal and 23 NDP.

So on election night there could be a substantial splash of red (of the non-Liberal variety) on the Canadian political landscape.

When I was growing up, it was common to see Progressive Conservative signs spread liberally across lawns, including my grandfather's, on my reserve. At the time, this was a sign of gratitude, a response to the fact that it was the PCs under John Diefenbaker who gave native people the right to vote in 1960. Prior to that we were considered wards of the state and as such had no say in the direction of the country. This was better than in Australia, where all Aborigines didn't get the federal vote in all states and territories until 1967.

But nowadays, most people on the rez lean toward the Liberals or NDP. The changed nature of the Conservative Party has definitely had a negative effect on the political appetites of First Nations voters.

A good example would be the issue on the minds of most indigenous people this election: the 1,200 murdered and missing aboriginal women, and how each of the individual parties plans to address it – or not.

So far only the Liberals and the NDP have expressed an interest in holding a public inquiry.

The Conservatives continue to maintain that it's a criminal matter. They feel more comfortable dangling shiny big-ticket promises in front of us for our votes, like committing \$567 million over five years to help build "stronger communities," and \$215 million for skills development and training for aboriginal people.

The Green Party continues its drive to be Indian-friendly, offering up a bevy of interesting promises, including removal of the two per cent fund-ing cap on First Nations education and full funding of the program backlog (\$424 million).

Also high on their list is ensuring that any self-government negotiations do not lead to the extinguishing of aboriginal title rights or assimilation, and, most interestingly, a proposal to scrap the Indian Act. There's also an interest in fully implementing the recommendations of the 1996 Report Of The Royal Commission On Aboriginal Peoples. The original report set out a 20-year time-line to implement its recommendations. That would be... next year, I believe.

The Liberals are offering the most assurances. If given a mandate, Justin Trudeau and his crowd plan to provide, among other things, more money to support and enhance indigenous languages, an initial commitment of an extra \$515 million a year for core education in First Nations schools (K to 12) for a total of \$2.6 billion over four years, and the development of a "federal reconciliation framework" to resolve grievances related to existing historical treaties and land-claims agreements.

But let's not forget it was this man's father, along with Jean Chrétien, who first endorsed the controversial and coincidentally named white paper in 1969 that basically called for eliminating any special recognition for native people by abolishing the Indian Act and dismantling the legal relationship between native people and the government of Canada. To put it mildly, it did not go over well with most of us. Natives became restless, and the proposal was quickly sacrificed on the altar of good judgment.

The New Democratic Party, meanwhile, is making a bunch of feel-good promises, including the creation of a cabinet-level committee, chaired by the prime minister, to ensure that federal government decisions respect treaty rights, inherent rights and Canada's international obligations. And building an all-weather road (an idea the Liberals also support) for the problem-plagued Shoal Lake 40 First Nation.

All the major parties, with the exception of the Greens, plan in some way to review or commit to the 94 recommendations released by the Truth And Reconciliation Commission on residential schools. All parties except the Conservatives plan to implement the United Nations Declaration On The Rights Of Indigenous Peoples.

Native well-being may not be as sexy as Senate misdeeds, but it is an area where a lot of us quite frequently feel wet and miserable. Surviving is a matter of picking the right umbrella.

Drew Hayden Taylor is an award-winning playwright, author and humorist. He is originally from Curve Lake First Nations in central Ontario.

Drew Hayden Taylor is an award-winning playwright, author and humorist. He is originally from Curve Lake First Nations in central Ontario.

Direct Link: <https://nowtoronto.com/news/the-now-guide-to-the-2015/why-first-nations-might-vote-in-%23elxn42/>

Nova Scotia native voters vow to be heard

ANDREA GUNN OTTAWA BUREAU
Published October 11, 2015 - 7:26pm

Anti-Tory attitude strong: 'Genocide didn't work Harper'



Millbrook Coun. Linda Maloney: ‘When you have someone like Harper dictating to his people (that) you’re not allowed to speak, you’re not allowed to voice your opinion, that reminds me of the residential schools.’

Turn off Highway 102 for the Millbrook reserve and you’ll immediately see a large sign that reads “Genocide didn’t work Harper.” Another implores: “First Nations people, please get out and vote.”

The Mi’kmaq community near Truro is peppered with election signs, most prominently for Bill Casey, the Liberal candidate in Cumberland-Colchester. Two large Elections Canada banners are in the band administration office and stacks of primers on election regulations and guidelines sit on tables in the waiting area. Polling station information hangs in convenience store windows and on community bulletin boards.

With Canadians heading to the polls in a little over a week, this would hardly be surprising in most communities. But considering the historically dismal on-reserve federal turnout — on average, 34 per cent since 2004 — it’s clear something has changed.

Galvanized by the growing tension between the Harper government and First Nations on issues like education, access to clean water, the environment, the Idle No More movement, and cries for an inquiry into Canada’s missing and murdered aboriginal women, First Nations voters could surge to polls across the province and country next Monday. And with 51 national ridings identified by the Assembly of First Nations as ones where aboriginal populations could sway the vote — including Dartmouth-Cole Harbour, Kings-Hants and Sydney-Victoria in Nova Scotia — politicians should be listening.

For the first time in her life, Lindsay Gloade has pledged to cast a ballot in the federal election. And the 29-year-old community college student, who lives with her two children in Millbrook, one of 42 reserve locations in Nova Scotia, says she’s not alone.

“Just living on the reserve and speaking with everyone, there’s never been a ‘Let’s go vote! We’re voting!’ push,” she said. “But now we’re all gung-ho to vote, and that has never happened. And it’s all of us — the higher-ups to us on rations that are poor. Everyone wants this fixed.”

For Gloade and many others, it's the feeling of being ignored so long that's pushing her to the polls, as a way to ensure her voice is heard.

"I've noticed everything that's happened with Mi'kmaq people ... we've been affected a lot by Harper. I want him out, and that's why I'm voting."

Assembly of First Nations regional chief Morley Googoo said the swing toward voter engagement is palpable across the country.

"There's a lot more younger people engaged, and the younger people have sparked a motivation to their older brothers, sisters and parents as well."

Googoo said the surge is a direct result of frustrations with Ottawa.

"First Nations communities are dealing with a lot of challenges that the government is ignoring," he said.

Traditionally, Googoo said, First Nations people come out in high numbers for elections to choose their chief and band council because that impacts them on a tangible level. But, he said, people tend to feel that voting in a federal or provincial election doesn't directly affect their community in any significant way.

That sentiment is changing, he said, as people consider issues such as fishing and hunting rights, the environment, and missing and murdered aboriginal women.

"People are starting to put the two together, realizing the chief and council can't change those major things. It has to be people, and the way to do it is to go to the polls."

Sheila Pierro has voted for her chief and council religiously but in her 39 years has only voted in one federal election.

"(Chief and council) affects us here in the community, so then, of course, I go and vote because I know the changes will happen," she said.

But the buzz in Pierro's community has encouraged her to change her tune this time around. She said she doesn't know who she'll vote for yet, but she plans to consult with her community elders before casting a ballot.

One elder has made her choice clear. Matilda Bernard, a residential school survivor and the owner of the two lawn signs visible when entering the community, is not shy about proclaiming her support for the Liberals.

Bill Casey signs feature prominently on her property and a Justin Trudeau poster adorns her front door. She said she is doing everything she can to encourage members of her community to vote with one goal in mind.

“I’m not beating around no damn bush, I want them to get rid of Harper. I’ve talked to so many people I’m blue in the face,” she said.

Bernard’s sister, Millbrook councillor Linda Maloney, is on the same page.

“We spent 10 years in the residential schools, each of us,” Maloney said. “They always told you when to go to bed, when to eat, when to do everything. When you have someone like Harper dictating to his people (that) you’re not allowed to speak, you’re not allowed to voice your opinion, that reminds me of the residential schools.”

However they choose to vote, Googoo said he hopes to see all the talk turn into action next Monday.

“Some people still traditionally feel they shouldn’t vote, that it’s a foreign government, but the reality is you have to make a difference somehow.”

Direct Link: <http://thechronicleherald.ca/novascotia/1316186-nova-scotia-native-voters-vow-to-be-heard>

Rock the Vote targets low election turnout in First Nations communities

Long campaign seems to be working in favour of those encouraging participation at polls

By Adrienne Arsenault, [CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 12, 2015 4:31 PM ET Last Updated: Oct 13, 2015 1:28 PM ET



When 24-year-old Deanna Carpenter of the Whitedog reserve in northwestern Ontario typed her details into the Elections Canada website to see if she was registered, the site spat back a message that cut deep: Error: no address found.

It's not entirely a surprise because it seems the site doesn't accept most reserve addresses. It doesn't accept some other rural addresses, either.

But for Carpenter, that message landed hard. It seemed to say that as a young First Nations woman considering voting for the first time, she wasn't really part of the club. Her vote wasn't wanted.

"I thought; 'Well, OK, I guess I can't vote,' " she said.

Some might have given up there and just decided not to bother trying to register or trying to vote in the federal election on Oct. 19.

Voter turnout among some First Nations groups is staggeringly low, almost 20 per cent lower than the Canadian average of around 61 per cent.

In the Ojibway community of Whitedog, it was even worse during the last federal election, hovering around 30 per cent.

There aren't many places in Canada with lower turnouts.

Working extra hard

The thing is, Carpenter didn't get discouraged, she got mad. And then she got involved.

With some nudging from a cousin, she decided she'd work extra hard to boost engagement in her community.



Kirk Cameron has been using a well-practised speech on friends who dared be apathetic about voting in his midst. (CBC)

And she had company. A few of her friends decided to roll up their sleeves. The seemingly always smiling Kirk Cameron decided to step up, too.

Between them they devised a plan to hold voter registration clinics on the reserve, ensure the residents of Whitedog were registered, had all the right ID according to the new rules under the Fair Elections Act and then encourage them to go out to vote.

These voter registration clinics are catching on in First Nations communities, particularly it seems in the riding of Kenora.

Kenora represents a vast swath of northwestern Ontario. It's a riding held by Conservative Greg Rickford.

It also happens to be the home of Tania Cameron, who once ran for the NDP. Now, she seems dedicated to running a "Rock the Vote" campaign among First Nations communities. Facebook is her bullhorn.

And Carpenter heard her call. So did a number of other young people from First Nations across Kenora.

There are roughly 40 First Nations in the riding and that's key because the Assembly of First Nations has identified Kenora as one of 51 ridings countrywide where the electoral result could be seriously impacted if only First Nations communities were mobilized.

Looking for 20%

"I would like to see an increase in voter turnout of 20 to 25 per cent, If our people get coordinated at the ballot box, I think we can have an impact," Tania Cameron said earlier this month.

She estimates she has managed to set up voter registration programs within 20 separate First Nations just in Kenora riding.

And she's been fielding calls from around the country. Help appears to be needed because new rules under the Fair Elections Act make the process a bit more strict when it comes to the type and amount of identification needed to vote.

Tania Cameron worries that the more remote the community, the more unlikely people will be to have certain types of government ID like drivers licences, so two types of alternate identification will have to be sorted out for them.

The long campaign seems to be working in their favour. The young team from Whitedog has been using the time to get organized and enthusiastic in ways that feel new to them. And Kirk Cameron has been using his well-practised speech on friends who dared be apathetic in his midst.

'Back in their hands'

"They don't have the right to complain in a way because if they don't take any initiative to change the future, then why do nothing and still complain about it? So I pretty much put the responsibility back in their hands."

It's a line he delivers with the broadest of beams. Like Deanna Carpenter, he is all in.

There are perhaps 1,000 people in Whitedog and only a few hundred who voted in the last federal election.

So any new faces in the process are a success. In one afternoon alone of guiding both youth and elders through the rules and ensuring they were registered, the young team figure they have already boosted likely turnout by at least 10 per cent.

Will all this effort turn into more actual voters come the big day? It will if Kirk Cameron has anything to do with it.

"We'll go pick them up and go grab them out of their house, steal them out of the shower," he said with a laugh.

Don't put it past them.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/rock-the-vote-first-nations-1.3266798>

Ottawa must fix broken relationship with First Nations: Editorial

One of Stephen Harper's first acts on becoming prime minister was to ditch the Kelowna Accord. Regardless of their political stripes, the next government should revive that approach.

Published on Sun Oct 11 2015

When the Harper government scuttled the Kelowna Accord in 2006 it set the tone for a decade of discord between Canada's First Nations and the federal government.

In the years since the accord's demise its promise to deliver the most basic necessities to First Nations reserves — clean water, habitable housing, health care, education and economic opportunities — have gone unfulfilled.

As result, instead of improved relations between Ottawa and indigenous peoples we've seen the opposite: blockades, demonstrations and the [Idle No More](#) protests.

Instead of improved education, the Conservatives simply scrapped a \$1.9-billion education agreement after aboriginal leaders rejected the strings attached to it.

And instead of a resolution to the heart-wrenching issue of murdered and missing aboriginal women, the government has simply refused to hold an inquiry.

It's long past time for a new start. No matter which party wins the election on Oct. 19, one of its first priorities must be to fix this broken relationship. And it should start by reviving talks aimed at resurrecting the approach set out in the Kelowna Accord.

Far from getting better, things have gotten worse under the Harper government for most aboriginal people living on reserves, according to a 2012 report from former auditor general Sheila Fraser.

The result is that many First Nations people have been condemned to lives of poverty, poor health and despair. The signs are all there in:

- High [suicide rates](#): 126 per 100,000 for native men, versus 24 for non-native men; 35 per 100,000 for native women versus just 5 for non-native women.
- High rates of [incarceration](#): 10 times that of non-natives. Aboriginals make up 4 per cent of the population but 23 per cent of those in prison.
- High rates of kids in [foster care](#): almost half of children in care are aboriginal.
- Poor health, as measured in high diabetes and obesity rates, and, according to a 2014 UN report, “significant gaps” in life expectancy and infant mortality compared to others.

This is a shameful situation that must change. But where to begin? Among the priorities all parties should be committing to:

- Education: Funding for a First Nations child going to elementary or high school is 20 to 40 per cent lower (depending on the province) than for non-native kids. That leads to crowding, inferior schools and a drop-out rate four times the national average.
- Clean water: Fraser found [half](#) of the drinking water systems on reserves pose a health threat.
- Housing: In 2014 a UN watchdog warned of a housing “crisis” in aboriginal communities.
- Economic opportunities. Statistics Canada doesn't even collect unemployment figures on reserves. But a pilot project near Calgary found people living on one reserve had an unemployment rate *five times* higher than non-aboriginals in Alberta.
- Resolving battles over resources, treaty rights and land claims. The 2014 UN report found negotiations around land treaties and [claims](#) had bogged down “with no foreseeable end.”

Despite all this, aboriginal issues have received hardly any attention during this campaign.

In fact, until this week, only the Liberals had released a platform on aboriginal issues. Among its promises: \$2.6 billion for First Nations education, \$500 million over three years for school infrastructure; and \$50 million more per year in financial assistance for indigenous people attending college and university. Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau also promised to implement all 94 recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, call a public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women, and lift the 2-per-cent cap on funding for First Nations programming.

On Wednesday, the NDP's Tom Mulcair unveiled his party's approach, promising \$4.8 billion over eight years for aboriginal education, the removal of the 2-per-cent funding cap, \$375 million for clean water and sanitation over four years, and \$120 million for health services for indigenous people in urban centres. He had earlier promised to ensure future federal decisions will respect Canada's obligations to First Nations and to hold a national inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women.

The Conservative campaign hasn't set out a platform in this area. But the government's 2015 budget included \$200 million over five years for First Nations education, and \$215 million over five years to provide skills and development training. The Conservatives have also committed \$500 million over seven years to on-reserve school infrastructure.

Regardless of who wins in nine days, politicians owe it to First Nations people to revive the approach set out in the Kelowna Accord. Its goal was to "close the gap" between the standard of living for First Nations and non-aboriginals by 2016. Sadly, that date is now very close – but the goals remain far away.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/2015/10/11/ottawa-must-fix-broken-relationship-with-first-nations-editorial.html>

Aboriginal voters ponder policies on education, 'nation-to-nation relationship'

Politicians focus on just a few issues from a wide range of challenges facing First Nations people

[CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 13, 2015 9:59 AM ET Last Updated: Oct 13, 2015 3:53 PM ET



Agnes Pranteau, 74, casts a vote for the NDP during advance voting at Otineka Mall on the Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN). Pranteau says despite internal turmoil within the party's elected officials, she consistently votes for the NDP. (Chris Glover/CBC)

While federal politicians talk about the aboriginal education gap, Catherine Pawis lives with this every day.

The principal of Wasauksing-Kinomaugewgamik elementary school in Wasauksing, south of Sudbury, said the \$4,500 per pupil she receives from the federal government barely covers the basics at her school in Wasauksing, south of Sudbury.

"It's extremely difficult. I wouldn't say it's possible on the budget that we get," said Pawis.

She said she's fortunate that the Wasuaksing band tops up her budget by about \$50,000 every year, while other communities can't afford to do that.

Pawis said her real concern is not that first nations schools get the same funding as those in the mainstream education system, but that the "achievement gap" be narrowed so that far more Aboriginal youth graduate and finish their schooling.

"The education gap is not just about funding, it's about student achievement and attainment," she said.

"Even if funding were comparable, there needs to be an infusion of additional resources into first nations schools, if that achievement gap is ever going to be corrected."

As for the party promises, the Conservatives say they'll increase funding to first nations education by 25 per cent, while the NDP is promising \$1.8 billion over four years. And the Liberals vow \$2.68 billion over the same period.

Everyone but the Conservatives are pledging to scrap the two per cent funding cap on social service payments to first nations that currently keeps any social funding to first nations from going up more than two per cent a year.

Crime, social problems

The other aboriginal issue that's gotten a lot of airtime during the campaign are the calls by most of the parties for an inquiry into the hundreds of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

It's an issue Norman Beauvais thinks about almost every day in his job as a court support worker for the N'Swakamok Friendship Centre in Sudbury.

"When you see female clients going through the system and either living or working on the street, you think sometimes 'How long will it take before they're another missing or murdered aboriginal woman?'" he said.

Beauvais is a bit disappointed that the parties haven't given much time to other social problems facing First Nations or suggested ways to cut down on the high numbers who are involved with the criminal justice system.

He said he sees a lot of people who continually end up in jail, largely because they don't understand the court system.

'Why are we sending the money back?'



Caroline Meawasige of Serpent River First Nations waits to ask a question at a candidates debate in Elliot Lake. (Erik White/CBC)

Some aboriginal voters have very specific local concerns they want the candidates to address.

Caroline Meawasige from Serpent River First Nation is quizzing candidates in her riding of Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing on money her band is being forced to return to the federal government.

A recently-opened water treatment plant came in \$600,000 under budget and Aboriginal Affairs is insisting that money be sent back to Ottawa. But Meawasige would rather see it spent in her community on new fire hydrants and firefighting equipment.

"Why are we sending the money back, when we could use it?" said Meawasige, citing this as a good example of why First Nations need more autonomy from the federal government.

Much of the talk of aboriginal issues during the election campaign has been more general with parties promising "nation-to nation relationships" and to "honour the treaties."

University of Sudbury Indigenous studies professor Brock Pitawanakwat said, while it may seem like political platitudes, those big questions surrounding the relationship between aboriginal people and the rest of Canada have to be settled before getting into specifics.

"I think that leads to a more effective, a more productive conversation," he said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/aboriginal-voters-ponder-policies-on-education-nation-to-nation-relationship-1.3264188>

Aboriginal people in Cape Breton face difficulties registering to vote

Many civic addresses in Eskasoni aren't in the federal database

[CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 13, 2015 6:40 AM AT Last Updated: Oct 13, 2015 6:40 AM AT



New voter registration rules are causing confusion among Aboriginal people in Cape Breton.

The chief the largest Mi'kmaq First Nation in the world is advising people in aboriginal communities to check ahead before they head out to vote in the federal election.

Eskasoni Chief Leroy Denny said new voter registration rules are causing some confusion and a lot of people from the community are having trouble registering to vote.

"I had a hard time," he said, adding he had to contact the Elections Canada office.

"I registered my license, my address, my postal code. It's not picking up."

Denny said a lot of civic addresses in Eskasoni aren't in the federal database, so when people go online to register with Elections Canada the system doesn't recognize their address.

People can still register in person when they show up to cast their ballot but Denny said that may create another problem.

Aboriginal people can't show just their status card as they have in the past — they now require a second ID or piece of mail with their current address.

Elections Canada going door-to-door

Adam Gould, a revising agent for Elections Canada, is trying to ensure people in Membertou are prepared for election day.

"The message we're trying to get out there is: if you intend to vote, you must be registered," he said.

Gould is going door-to-door and holding community meetings to help people register.

"I think once I explain the changes to them they have that understanding," he said.

Gould said he hasn't yet come across any large concerns about not being able to vote.

He thinks voting will go smoothly as long as people know in advance what they'll need to cast their ballots.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/federal-election-voting-registration-1.3265705>

'We can mobilize': First Nations voters will be key part of election, says Perry Bellegarde

[James Wood, Calgary Herald](#)

Published on: October 14, 2015 | Last Updated: October 14, 2015 11:03 AM MDT

First Nations leaders say indigenous Canadians are engaged with the federal election, and that could have consequences for the federal Conservatives.

Speaking in Calgary on Tuesday, Assembly of First Nations grand chief Perry Bellegarde said he will work with whatever government is elected on Oct. 19, but the status quo on policies can't be maintained.

Addressing a Treaty 7 education conference, Bellegarde said the key issue for the next government is helping to close the gap in quality of life between aboriginal Canadians and the rest of the country.

"We need a better relationship with government, with the prime minister and cabinet," Bellegarde told reporters following his speech at the Coast Plaza Hotel.

"We need to work collaboratively together, co-operatively together, start making key investments in education and training and housing."

Bellegarde said the discontent that helped spur the Idle No More movement of the last few years is still manifest among many First Nations unhappy over what he said were unilateral moves by the federal Conservative government.

The AFN wants the government to call an inquiry — and take action — on the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women. Stephen Harper's Conservatives have refused to do so, while Liberal Justin Trudeau and NDP Leader Tom Mulcair have both backed an inquiry.

Bellegarde said there are 51 ridings across Canada where aboriginal voters could make the difference in the local race.

"The message is simple — our priorities matter, our issues matter, our people matter and our vote will matter on Oct. 19 because we can mobilize," he said.

"I see the excitement happening in our communities, a lot of people getting organized. So I'm hoping that (the) 40 per cent aboriginal/First Nations turnout is higher, goes higher, and I think I can almost say guaranteed it's going to be higher."

A study commissioned by Elections Canada pegged voter turnout on reserves in the 2011 federal election as 45 per cent, compared to 61 per cent overall nationally.

The number was even lower on First Nations in Alberta, coming in at 33 per cent.

But Charles Weasel Head, chief of the Blood Tribe and Treaty 7 Grand Chief, said turnout was up significantly for the provincial vote that saw the NDP elected this spring, and there was significant interest in the advance polling held from last Friday to Monday.

Only one riding — Edmonton-Griesbach — of the 51 identified by AFN is in Alberta. But Weasel Head said the sentiment among many Treaty 7 voters is clear.

"I think, at this point in time, our people are looking for change," he told reporters.

Weasel Head said a major issue in the election is First Nations education, which is a federal responsibility. The province estimates funding for education on First Nations is, per child, around 80 per cent of the level off-reserve.

The First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act proposed by the federal Conservatives stalled in the face of aboriginal opposition and Weaselhead said it is time to return to the table.

In the party's election platform, the Conservatives say they have "taken significant action to promote the economic and social well-being of Canada's First Nations," including increasing aboriginal education funding by 25 per cent, construction of 41 new schools and boosting health funding.

The platform commits a re-elected Conservative government to work with willing provinces and First Nations to improve educational outcomes, as well as other measures "to help our aboriginal communities thrive and flourish."

Alberta Education Minister David Eggen, who also addressed the education conference Tuesday, told reporters that regardless who wins next Monday, the federal government must acknowledge the discrepancy in funding.

"The disparity here in the province of Alberta is very marked and we're open to developing partnerships with a new federal government that would seek to achieve equality and social justice for First Nations students," said the NDP minister.

Eggen began his remarks to the Treaty 7 conference by saying he expects to see a change of government in the federal election.

"We're looking for a time for change not just in Alberta, but across the country. I hope the people are taking that to heart," he said.

"It's good to change the government every so often, just like changing the sheets on your bed. More than that, I think, it's a chance to look for something more hopeful."

Direct Link: <http://calgaryherald.com/news/politics/we-can-mobilize-first-nations-voters-will-be-key-part-of-election-says-perry-bellegarde>

Chief of Yukon's Kwanlin Dün First Nation urges citizens to vote

'It's our right to vote and I don't think we should be taking it lightly,' says Chief Doris Bill

By Nancy Thomson, [CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 13, 2015 7:48 AM CT Last Updated: Oct 13, 2015 7:48 AM CT



Doris Bill, chief of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, speaks with resident Mary Battaja. Bill is going door-to-door making sure everyone is registered to vote and knows the First Nations' issues. (Nancy Thomson/CBC)

It's a new approach for the Kwanlin Dün First Nation: the chief is going door-to-door, accompanied by an election coordinator, to ensure that everyone is registered to vote and knows the First Nations' issues.

Doris Bill was out in Whitehorse's MacIntyre community on Friday, talking to people about both the municipal and federal elections.

Yukon is one of 51 ridings identified by the Assembly of First Nations as one where the aboriginal vote could tip the balance. In the past, the First Nations vote has been lower than the national average, but Bill says the 2015 election could be a turning point,

"There are many issues that the federal government deals with that affects us as a community, and we need to have our say," Bill says.

"It's our right to vote. And I don't think we should be taking it lightly."

Mary Battaja, 72, is a member of the Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation. She says voting is important to her as a Canadian, and applauds Bill's efforts.

Battaja says people need to be informed about issues and platforms before they vote.

"People feel there's a need for a change. We like to see the government work, government to government, but things have changed a lot," Battaja says.

"Whoever becomes prime minister has to seriously take into account what the people's voices are really saying and they should be heard."



Chief Bill speaks with a Kwanlin Dün member. (Nancy Thomson/CBC)

Judith Custer, 71, says she always votes, and took Bill's advice and went to the advance poll on Friday.

She believes that First Nations voters will be out in full strength on October 19th.

"I think this year it will change, because we do have the power, and the knowledge now to be swaying the government, whichever way we feel that it's gonna benefit our First Nations people. You bet we do!" Custer says.

A coordinator will continue to knock on doors next week to make sure that Kwanlin Dün citizens are registered, have the proper documentation, and to offer transportation to the polling stations.

Bill says Kwanlin Dün is part of a national trend.

"I can tell you that the First Nation community across the country is mobilizing like never before and this community is no different."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/chief-of-yukon-s-kwanlin-d%C3%BCn-first-nation-urges-citizens-to-vote-1.3267843>

Factors for low Aboriginal voter turnout vary

By [Karl Hele](#)

Tuesday, October 13, 2015 4:23:13 EDT PM



Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde outlines AFN's priorities for the current federal election during a news conference in Ottawa.

GARDEN RIVER FIRST NATION - With the upcoming federal election and the clarion call for Aboriginal Peoples to get out and vote in an effort to "Stop Harper," a column on the history of the First Nations franchise seems appropriate. Traditionally, as in pre-Indian legislation, First Nations communities chose their leadership in a variety of ways, none of which involved the European notion of a majority vote. With the end of the War of 1812, settlers began to seek ways in which to humanely reform First Nations society to prevent our extinction while establishing their own version of England in British Canada.

As part of the process in creating governance in North America, the British issued the Royal Proclamation of 1763. Within this document, Indians are specifically not referred to as "subjects" of the Crown. Although the settler government does not acknowledge the validity of the wampum treaties, our wampum belts from the 1600s, 1700s, and early-1800s appear to expressly ally ourselves with the settlers on equal but separate terms. Nonetheless, questions about the level of Indian competence and capacity to vote existed within the colony. I believe as part of the answer to whether or not Indians were subjects and to ensure we had the capacity to understand the associated rights of a subject, Settlers came up with the concept of enfranchisement.

The General Enfranchisement Act of 1857 in the United Canadas established a precedent that continues to plague First Nations communities. The 1857 act only applied to adult males. After passing a set of requirements involving literacy, morality, and freedom from debt as man could apply for enfranchisement and receive a piece of land from the reserve which was subject to taxation. The rules changed little with Confederation in 1867. For instance, according to the 1869 Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians, a man could receive an allotment of reserve land if he had acquired the proper "degree of civilization" and was known for his "integrity and sobriety," thereby making him a "safe and suitable person" to own land. With land ownership, in theory, came the right to vote. Unfortunately, after 1867 the right to vote in federal elections was based on provincial franchise laws after 1867. Simply if you met the property rights under provincial franchise laws you were also eligible to vote in federal elections.

At the local level, an effort was made to train Indians in the Western democratic tradition, by the creation of elected band governments under the 1876 Indian Act. From 1876 until relatively recently, these elected band governments were imposed on bands with the intent of teaching us the importance of voting. The imposition of a foreign system of choosing our leaders has led since its inception to relatively low voter turn out rates. For instance, at Garden River in September 2015, only 765 cast ballots out of a possible

2,336 members (based 2011 census), albeit not all are of the age of majority. Overall, most reserves have a voter participation rate of approximately 20%. While this is a lower participation rate than that of Canadians generally, like the majority of the population, First Nations always have something to complain about when it comes to chief and council. Nevertheless, the central idea surrounding elections on reserves under the Indian Acts was to teach us democratic process and aid in our assimilation into the general population.

Following Confederation, the provinces began a process of denying Indians the right to vote. This legalized disenfranchisement at the provincial level also served to bar Indians from voting in federal elections, thereby denying our ability to affect Indian policies and legislation. In 1874, Ontario's franchise laws only allowed those Indians enfranchised under federal legislation to vote if they met the wealth and land qualifications. The following year, in 1875, British Columbia banned "Chinamen and Indians" from voting. Other provinces slowly followed the discriminatory denial of Indian voting rights: Manitoba in 1886, New Brunswick in 1889, Saskatchewan in 1908, Alberta in 1909, Quebec in 1909 and Prince Edward Island in 1915. Indians were not allowed to vote provincially until mid-twentieth century.

Federal politicians not above discrimination began their own process of denying Indians voting rights in 1885, regardless of whether or not they held the provincial franchise, with the passage of the Electoral Franchise Act. The 1885 act specifically excluded all Indians living in the West, B.C., and the territories, as well as those resident on reserves everywhere else unless one was in possession and occupation of a separate and distinct tract of land in such reserve, and whose improvements on such separate tract are not of the value of at least \$150, and who is not otherwise possessed of the qualifications entitling him to be registered on the list of voters under this act. This small section of the 1885 act did allow some Indians to vote, particularly those on Six Nations Reserve in Ontario. Apparently, Tory Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald believed that the nature of Indian title should not restrict an Indian's right to vote. Regardless, this law was repealed in 1898. A Liberal member of Parliament, A. H. Gillmor, described the 1885 act as "political rascality" by Sir John A. Macdonald. Others who were opposed to the Indian vote argued that they were wards of the state, not capable of civilization, and incapable of managing their own affairs. Other arguments claimed that since Indians did not pay taxes they could not vote and that the government's control of people under the Indian Act left First Nations' vote prone to tampering. Politicians opposed to the Indian franchise, according to Richard Bartlett's 1980 article, *Citizens Minus: Indians and the Right to Vote*, also vigorously described us a "low and filthy," "barbarians," "brutes," and "dirty, filthy, lousy Indians." These political leaders also argued that Indians involved in the 1885 Rebellion should not be allowed to vote.

The next "reforms" to the Indian franchise question came in 1924 and 1934. In 1924, the right to vote was granted to all Indian veterans of the First World War, even those living on reserves. Ten years later, under the terms of the Dominion Franchise Act of 1934, Indians living on reserves as well as the Inuit were explicitly excluded from the franchise with exception of war veterans. Further developments surrounding First Nations and Inuit

voting rights would not take place until after the development of human rights following the Second World War. The first province to recognize the rights of First Nations to the franchise was British Columbia, which granted the right to vote in 1949. B.C. was followed by Manitoba in 1952, Ontario in 1954, Saskatchewan in 1960, P.E.I and N.B. in 1963, Alberta in 1965 and Quebec in 1969. Federally, Indians would only receive the unqualified right to vote in 1960 under the guidance of Progressive Conservative Prime Minister John Diefenbaker. Unlike the acrimonious and racist debate in 1898, the House of Commons almost unanimously supported the legislation. For the first time in Canada, since the 1850s, could an Indian vote without losing his or her status. The Inuit had gained the federal franchise in 1950.

Nevertheless, as seen by recent efforts to "rally the vote," Aboriginal participation in all Canadian elections remains low. Many Haudenosaunee refuse to participate, believing that they are a sovereign nation whose citizens do not vote in foreign elections. Similar sentiments are offered across Canada by individuals and communities when it comes to the Canadian franchise. Like the Haudenosaunee, many believe that the treaties and wampum records indicate that we are sovereign nations and, as such, not entitled to vote. These groups and individuals are also concerned that by participating in Canadian elections, First Nations are accepting assimilation, giving up on our treaties, and losing our sovereignty. These concerns and arguments appear to be in the minority. Many First Nations now see voting as their right as citizens (some consider themselves dual citizens). Others feel that this right, regardless of sovereignty concerns, was granted by Canada and we should exercise it. And, drawing from many online discussions, people believe that a failure to vote presents a greater danger to our rights, privileges, and sovereignty. Still others, like all Canadians, are being driven by fear and loathing of the incumbent government's policies and practices.

Direct Link: <http://www.saultstar.com/2015/10/13/factors-for-low-aboriginal-voter-turnout-vary>

Editorial: Aboriginal issues missing from federal campaign

[Edmonton Journal](#)

Published on: October 14, 2015 | Last Updated: October 14, 2015 6:28 AM MDT



Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde holds a news conference to outline the AFN's priorities for the upcoming federal election, in Ottawa on Sept. 2, 2015. Fred Chartrand / The Canadian Press

If we've heard far too much about the niqab in the current federal election campaign, what we've heard far too little about are the fundamental and urgent issues involving aboriginal people in this country.

It's only now, with less than a week to go before election day Oct. 19, that the party leaders increasingly are addressing those issues, which include the scandalous shortage of proper housing and clean water in many communities, underspending on education for aboriginals and the high number of missing and murdered indigenous women.

Last week, NDP Leader Tom Mulcair unveiled the indigenous plank of his party's platform, pledging a "nation-to-nation" relationship with aboriginal peoples and big spending, concerning education in particular.

Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau said he would devote part of his proposed infrastructure spending to providing clean drinking water to the 93 communities subject to Health Canada boil-water advisories, some for decades. While the ambitious nature of those spending initiatives might give rise to skepticism about their fulfilment, at least those parties are signalling that these urgent problems are priorities. As well, both parties are committed to holding an inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women, something that would focus our attention on this continuing and multi-faceted issue. The Harper government has rejected an inquiry as unnecessary.

One byproduct of the difficult relations that the Harper government has had with aboriginals is that more of them than ever are expected to vote in this election. Very few Mohawks will be among them, in keeping with their rejection of anything that would seem to acknowledge Canadian sovereignty over their territory. But many others are heeding Assembly of First Nations national chief Perry Bellegarde's call for participation; the more aboriginals who become voters, the more that national politicians will need to pay attention to their views.

But aboriginal issues should not be of interest only to aboriginals, any more than women's issues should be of interest only to women. These are crucial matters for our

society as a whole, and addressing them in a just and effective manner is vitally important to the future of this nation.

From the Montreal Gazette

Speaking out on mental health

It was Mental Illness Awareness Week last week, an event that aims to help break the silence on mental-health issues, to bring them out of the shadows in which they so often dwell. It's a hugely worthwhile goal.

Comedian and television show host Howie Mandel, who has obsessive-compulsive disorder, has said that if we could speak as openly about our mental health as we do about our dental health, we'd be in a good place. We're not there yet.

It helps when high-profile people associate themselves with mental health issues, as did city councillor Scott McKeen and MLA David Shepherd at a World Mental Health Day event in Edmonton Saturday.

But most importantly, it helps when ordinary Canadians speak out, as they do in the Faces of Mental Illness campaign. Through video profiles and in meetings with policymakers and at workplaces last week, five ordinary Canadians shared their experiences of living with mental illness and finding recovery.

When we tell our stories, it encourages dialogue with friends, the broader community and government. It helps those who are struggling realize they're not alone. It makes the world a healthier place.

Direct Link: <http://edmontonjournal.com/opinion/editorials/1014-oped-editorials>

Council of Yukon First Nations is advising citizens to 'vote strategically'

The CYFN is directing people to a website on strategic voting, which says to vote Liberal

By Nancy Thomson, [CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 14, 2015 7:00 AM CT Last Updated: Oct 14, 2015 3:19 PM CT



CYFN Grand Chief Ruth Massie says Yukon chiefs are deeply unhappy with the treatment they've received from the Conservative government of Stephen Harper, so she's urging aboriginal voters to vote strategically. (Nancy Thomson/CBC)

The Council of Yukon First Nations has taken an unexpected and significant step: it's directing citizens of First Nations to a [website](#) on how to vote strategically.

"This is an unusual step for the Yukon First Nation leadership to encourage citizens to consider the past performance of governments and those seeking election," a statement from the CYFN states.

"We believe we must vote strategically to ensure that we elect a supportive government."

CYFN Grand Chief Ruth Massie says Yukon chiefs are deeply unhappy with the treatment they've received from the Conservative government of Stephen Harper.

"They have done absolutely very little, if nothing, to assist us in the implementation of our agreements," Massie said.

"The Conservatives have not been very good to First Nations right across this country, and especially up here."

Yukon Conservative candidate Ryan Leef refused to comment.

Not the first endorsement by chiefs

Massie concedes that urging First Nations to follow the advice of a strategic voting website is essentially an endorsement of Liberal candidate Larry Bagnell, as the site advises Yukoners to vote Liberal in order to change the government in Ottawa.

But Massie says it's not the first time that Yukon chiefs have issued such an endorsement.

She says it happened 42 years ago, when an early predecessor of the CYFN, the Yukon Native Brotherhood, endorsed the Liberal party.

"Of course that was because we were trying to sign off our umbrella final agreement... to start our land claim process. And it worked," Massie says.

"I will say the Liberal party has always been very favourable to our agendas."

Massie says many First Nations voters have questions about which party to support.

"We're saying to them, 'You can make a difference. Go to this site, read the material, read the articles, visit with the candidates. But get out and vote.'"

Massie says protecting their final agreements is an absolute priority. She says Yukon chiefs and First Nations have realized the power of their vote — and she says they will wield that power to protect their land claim agreements.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/council-of-yukon-first-nations-is-advising-citizens-to-vote-strategically-1.3269720>

Aboriginals hope to sway Canada vote

By Marc Braibant October 15, 2015 10:37 AM



Montreal (AFP) - Canada's indigenous peoples have long shunned national elections in protest at the colonization of their lands. But natives are expected to come out en masse for the first time Monday to try to sway the ballot.

The push came from Perry Bellegarde, chief of the Assembly of First Nations, which represents 900,000 members of 634 tribes across Canada.

Turnout among aboriginals on Canadian reserves was 44 percent in the 2011 elections, compared to 61 percent for the general population.

Bellegarde himself has never voted before in a federal election but vowed to cast a ballot this round to set an example for aboriginals -- in hope of gaining traction in Ottawa on issues important to natives.

Since his pitch in August, "there's been a lot of buzz on social media" calling on indigenous people to participate in the democratic process, said Thierry Rodon, a politics professor at Laval University in Quebec following this historic movement.

Canada's First Nations number more than 1.4 million, or four percent of the population -- theoretically not enough to impact the election results.



Conservative leader Stephen Harper, pictured on October 13, 2015, rejected calls for a national inquiry

But the race between the incumbent Tories, led by Stephen Harper, Justin Trudeau's Liberals and Thomas Mulcair's New Democrats is close. And the AFN has identified 51 electoral districts out of 338 where the aboriginal vote could decide the winner, either because of a slim margin or a high aboriginal population.

"We're telling our members to take the time to vote in order to get a government elected that will work with us" on issues important to natives, said Robert Bertrand of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples representing Metis, off-reserve and non-treaty Indians, and some Inuit.

- 'Aboriginals count' -

In power since 2006, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has had a difficult relationship with Canada's indigenous communities.

He earned widespread praise in 2008 for standing in Parliament and officially apologizing to natives for more than a century of abuses at boarding schools set up to assimilate aboriginals.



NDP leader Thomas Mulcair speaks at a campaign rally in London, Ontario on October 4, 2015 (AFP Photo)

From there, things quickly degenerated as the two sides found themselves increasingly at odds over policy.

Harper rejected calls for a national inquiry into the death or disappearance of more than 1,000 aboriginal women since the 1970s, and other specific demands to end squalid living conditions on reserves, improve health and education, and settle outstanding land claims.

The dispute led to massive protests, including rail disruptions and one chief going on a hunger strike to bring attention to the plight of Canada's natives.

The latest took place last week in Montreal, where hundreds chanted and banged drums in a loud downtown protest, critical of parties for ignoring them. "Aboriginals count," read placards in the march.

- Courting aboriginal vote -

The AFN has not endorsed any of the political parties in this contest.

But Bertrand said natives "should vote for the party that will best represent our interests in Ottawa."

The New Democrats and the Liberals have made overtures to natives in this campaign, while the Tories have kept mum.

"It is time for a new era that embraces a true nation to nation relationship (between Canada and native tribes) that is built on respect and, above all, makes meaningful progress when it comes to bringing about change," Mulcair said early this month.

Bellegarde welcomed the statement, saying the "nation-to-nation approach is the way forward." This perspective is rooted in the notion that tribes signed treaties in past centuries with British monarchs.

"The NDP addresses many of our key priorities and commits to high level engagement to work together to close the (social and economic) gap (between aboriginals and non-aboriginals in Canada)," Bellegarde said.

But he stopped short of endorsing the party.

"We will need to work with whichever party forms government and we want aboriginal issues to take a higher place on the national agenda," explained Dwight Dorey, head of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples.

Direct Link: <http://news.yahoo.com/aboriginals-hope-sway-canada-vote-143743962.html>

NDP platform receives full marks from Assembly of First Nations

Liberal and Green policies are judged lacking in revitalizing indigenous languages

By Susana Mas, [CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 15, 2015 2:20 PM ET Last Updated: Oct 15, 2015 4:27 PM ET



National Chief Perry Bellegarde has released the Assembly of First Nations assessment of the four main federal party platforms as they relate to First Nation priorities. (Ryan Remiorz/Canadian Press)

The Assembly of First Nations has released its assessment of the four main federal parties' platforms, giving the NDP full marks for what it calls a "comprehensive response to First Nations priorities."

"We want to ensure First Nations across Canada get all the facts before voting, to ensure they have the proper information to make an informed decision," said National Chief Perry Bellegarde in a written statement Thursday.

The AFN's assessment comes as the parties make a final push as their campaigns enter the final weekend before the general election on Monday, with the Liberals and Conservatives surging ahead in a two-way race.

Bellegarde said each party was asked for a formal response to the priorities laid out by the AFN, and the Conservative Party had yet to reply.

The assessment covers six broad themes:

- Strengthening First Nations, families and communities.
- Sharing and equitable funding.
- Upholding rights.
- Respecting the environment.
- Revitalizing indigenous languages.
- Truth and reconciliation.

According to the AFN, the NDP's platform provides a "comprehensive response" in all six areas.

By contrast, the Conservative Party's platform provides an "inadequate" or "incomplete" response in all of the six priorities.

The Liberal Party's platform gets full marks in five of the six categories, receiving "incomplete" marks for not doing enough to support the revitalization of indigenous languages.

The Green Party's platform provides a "comprehensive" response in four of the six priorities, but is deemed "partial or incomplete" when it comes to funding and support for indigenous languages.

Bellegarde to work with 'whoever' is elected

The Harper government's relationship with the AFN soured following the abrupt departure of former national chief Shawn Atleo, who resigned amid complaints from chiefs that he had sided with the Conservatives over a proposed First Nations Education Act.

[In an interview on CBC's *The House*](#), Conservative Party Leader Stephen Harper was asked if he thought the new national chief, who opposed the act, was prepared to work with him.

"I'm not sure whether he is or not," Harper said on Sept. 19. "Unfortunately, some in the AFN reversed their position [on the First Nations Education Act]. I think Mr. Bellegarde was one of those."

Today, Bellegarde said he was prepared to work with whichever party leader wins next Monday.

"I will work with whoever is elected Oct. 19 to close the gap in quality of life between First Nations people and Canadians," Bellegarde said.

"It's up to First Nations and all Canadians to decide who that will be."

Voter turnout up in the territories

Elections Canada said an estimated [3.6 million people voted during four days](#) of advance polls running from last Friday to Thanksgiving Monday, representing a 71 per cent increase over three days of advance polling in 2011.

Several [ridings in B.C. and Ontario](#) led the country for the number of votes cast at advance polls over the Thanksgiving weekend.

Voter turnout during advance polls was also high in the territories, according to [preliminary figures released by Elections Canada](#) on Wednesday.

In Nunavut the voter turnout more than tripled, with 1,109 people casting a ballot during four days of advance polls compared with 355 who voted during three days of advance polling in 2011.

Voter turnout in the Northwest Territories more than doubled, going from 1,262 ballots cast in 2011 to 2,746 this year.

Yukon also saw an increase in turnout with 3,013 people voting over four days, compared with 1,578 electors who voted in the last federal election.

The AFN has [identified 51 ridings](#) with the potential to wield great influence in the electoral outcome.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-election-2015-ndp-afn-1.3272676>

Assembly of First Nations releases assessment of federal party platforms, calls for informed voting

By STEPHANIE IP, The Province October 15, 2015



Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde says: ‘More and more people are realizing that our people matter, our priorities matter and our votes matter.’ — The Canadian Press files

The Assembly of First Nations has released its assessment of federal party platforms, noting the indigenous population has the potential to determine 51 ridings across the country, 11 of them in B.C.

“We want to ensure First Nations across Canada get all the facts before voting, to ensure they have the proper information to make an informed decision,” AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde said in a statement released Thursday.

“The Indigenous vote has the potential to influence 51 ridings and in this election every vote counts. It’s up to every single one of us to make an informed decision at the ballot box.”

In early September, the AFN released its report identifying First Nations concerns and priorities it hoped would be addressed in the upcoming election.

The AFN then asked each of the major parties to respond with their own take on how, if elected, their government would handle First Nations issues.

Responses were received from the Liberals, the New Democrats and the Greens. The responses, along with each party’s platform, were assessed and compiled into a report released Thursday.

The AFN’s report included a chart identifying how the major parties’ platforms fared when matched up against the AFN’s key issues.

The NDP was noted as having a “comprehensive response” to First Nations priorities across all six areas identified by the AFN.

The Liberals scored a “comprehensive response” to five of six areas, while the Greens scored the same in four of six areas.

The Conservatives had an “inadequate response” in four of six areas, and a “partial or incomplete response” to the remaining two areas.

“More and more people are realizing that our people matter, our priorities matter and our votes matter,” said Bellegarde.

“The human and economic costs to maintaining the gap that exists between our peoples and the rest of Canada are harmful to all of us.

“First Nations priorities must be Canada’s priorities because when First Nations succeed, we all succeed. We can and must work together to close the gap.”

The 11 B.C. constituencies identified by the AFN as possible aboriginal-vote swing ridings are: Cariboo-Prince George, Courtenay-Alberni, Cowichan-Malahat-Langford, Mission-Matsqui-Fraser Canyon, Nanaimo-Ladysmith, Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke, Skeena-Bulkley Valley, South Okanagan-West Kootenay, Surrey Centre, Surrey-Newton and North Island-Powell River.

According to an Elections Canada-commissioned poll, voter turnout on reserves was 45 per cent in the 2011 election, compared to 61 per cent nationally.

Earlier this week, Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs Grand Chief Stewart Phillip endorsed NDP candidate Angelique Wood in the riding of Central Okanagan-Similkameen-Nicola.

Direct Link:

<http://www.theprovince.com/life/assembly+first+nations+releases+assessment+federal+party/11441256/story.html>

Tories will leave lethal legacy for First Nations

First Nations communities face a series of overlapping crises that Ottawa has ignored for too long.



Assembly of First Nations Youth Council member Clayton Tootoosis takes part in a rally on Parliament Hill in December 2013. There is no doubt that the current government has set Canada's relationship with First Nations back a hundred years, writes Pamela Plamater.

By: Pam Palmater Published on Thu Oct 15 2015

The Harper Shift is a month-long look at how Canada has changed over a decade of Conservative government – and at what kind of country we want to become. Here Pam Palmater considers a decade of fraught Ottawa-First Nations relations.

Long before Tina Fontaine was pulled out of the Red River, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his Conservative government knew of the massive crisis of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls. As soon as the Native Women's Association of Canada published its report on the tragic epidemic, Harper cut the organization's funding. Much to Ottawa's surprise, the RCMP conducted its own research and found the crisis to be far worse than originally anticipated — 1,200 murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls in the last few decades alone. And Harper's response? "It's not high on our radar, to be honest."

Sadly, this is not the only crisis facing First Nations that Harper has either facilitated, ignored or made worse in the last decade. Despite representing only 4 per cent of the national population, Indigenous children represent half of all children in foster care and in places like Manitoba represent 90 per cent of all children in care. One baby is taken away from an Indigenous person every single day in Manitoba. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's (AANDC) internal analysis of the crisis found that the source of the problem is the department's own purposeful, chronic underfunding of child and family services programs in First Nations. Harper's response has been to spend millions on litigation defending against human rights claims of inequitable funding.

In the last 10 years, the gross over-representation of Indigenous peoples in prisons has also worsened. In fact, First Nations boys have a greater chance of going to jail than graduating from high school. The federal Office of the Correctional Investigator has said that this crisis is a direct result of the Ottawa's discriminatory laws and policies. Harper not only ignored the many alarms raised annually by Howard Sapers, the former correctional investigator; he got rid of him. Although the Supreme Court of Canada called the over-representation of Indigenous peoples a crisis that required specific action

to reduce incarceration rates, Harper enacted Bill C-10 to impose mandatory minimum sentences.

Attawapiskat wasn't the first community to gain national attention for the housing emergency on First Nations reserves, nor will Shoal Lake be the last community to highlight the lack of clean water on no less than 120 First Nations. Former auditor general Sheila Fraser repeatedly pointed out that the federal government failed to implement the recommendations "most important to the lives and well-being of First Nations" and that the lack of "equitable funding" on reserve is the cause of the current gap in socio-economic outcomes. The Harper government's response has been to implement massive funding cuts to First Nations and their advocacy organizations — effectively starving them into silence.

On nearly every socio-economic indicator, Canada has become worse for Indigenous peoples in the last 10 years. While every previous government, Liberal or Conservative, has had a hand in dispossessing and oppressing Indigenous peoples, the Harper government is one of the most aggressive, racist administrations in recent history.

Shortly after issuing an apology for residential schools, Harper denied that Canada had any history of colonialism. He is joined by an AANDC minister who, instead of working with First Nations leaders, accused them of being "threats to national security." Is it any surprise to find SWAT teams deployed against unarmed Indigenous men and women peacefully and legally protesting the denial of their rights? In fact, Canada's largest-ever social movement — Idle No More — was in reaction to Harper's suite of legislation imposed on First Nations without their consent and his refusal to address the many overlapping crises.

There is no doubt that Harper has set Canada's relationship with First Nations back a hundred years. James Anaya, the former United Nations Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples, was shocked by the "abysmal poverty" of First Nations in a country whose massive wealth comes from Indigenous lands. He noted that the government's adversarial relationship had become worse over the last decade and that its constant negative statements about First Nations in the media risk "social peace." The most recent United Nations Human Rights Committee review of Canada concluded that there is no more pressing issue facing the country than its human rights violations of First Nations.

What does all of this say about Canada, which is supposed to be a country that stands for human rights and freedoms, democracy and justice? What kind of country pursues an aggressive agenda of resource extraction, undermining the constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights of First Nations, while failing to do anything to address the fact that Indigenous people live seven to 20 years less than Canadians?

The critical question is whether Canadians will use their vote to end Harper's lethal legacy or whether this is the new reality for First Nations. Let's hope Canadians demand more of their government and go back to the original treaty vision of mutual respect, benefit and protection.

Pamela Palmater is a Mi'kmaw lawyer, activist, author and Chair in Indigenous Governance at Ryerson University.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2015/10/15/tories-built-lethal-legacy-for-first-nations.html>

'Rock the Indigenous Vote' group rallies in Calgary 4 days before election

By [Erika Tucker](#) Online Reporter Global News, October 15, 2015 4:23 pm



CALGARY – A movement encouraging indigenous people across Canada to [vote on Monday](#) held a rally in Calgary Thursday afternoon.

Dubbed #RockTheIndigenousVote, it's a self-professed group of “political and media savvy Indigenous people.”

“We have the ability to swing 51 ridings across our nation,” said founder Cara Currie-Hall in a statement.

“We are the sleeping giant and our voices will be heard.”

The Thursday rally drew about 50 people, and targeted Stephen Harper's riding of [Calgary Heritage](#). It followed a rally in Maskwacis in central Alberta on Wednesday. Events were also held in the last few weeks in Montreal, Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Edmonton, with another planned for Vancouver on Friday.

Currie-Hall said indigenous peoples involved in the campaign want to see change by “either electing an indigenous candidate or someone that has a platform where our interests are being served and recognized.”

The group's website has a list of aboriginal candidates running in the federal election that you can see [here](#).

“Our vote will cause the government of Canada to have a better relationship based on our Nation-to-Nation belief systems with our peoples,” said Currie-Hall. “We cannot afford to let this election go by without letting our voices be heard through our vote.”



A movement encouraging indigenous people across Canada to vote in the federal election held a rally in Calgary on Oct. 15, 2015.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2279420/rock-the-indigenous-vote-group-rallies-in-calgary-4-days-before-election/>

The undecided: some indigenous voters in Saskatoon are still searching

Finding right political party no easy task

[CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 15, 2015 11:54 AM CT Last Updated: Oct 15, 2015 11:54 AM CT



Lee Martell and Rob Innes says they are still searching for a political party that best represents their interests. (CBC)

First Nations leaders have been urging people to vote in the federal election, promising that the aboriginal community can change the outcome.

I think people want to vote. - *Rob Innes*

If any one party believes it has the indigenous community sewn up, they may want to think again, at least according to a panel of undecided voters on CBC Radio's *Saskatoon Morning*.

"I'm so confused about who I should vote for," said Lee Martell, a Cree woman from Waterhen Lake.

Martell and Rob Innes, a Cree and Saulteaux man from Cowessess First Nation, spoke with *Saskatoon Morning* host Leisha Grebinski today.

Martell is not just undecided. She is also a first-time voter.

She said that she has become swept up in the pro-vote activism that has swept through Saskatoon's west side neighbourhoods in the lead up to Monday's vote.

She may not have made up her mind, but she said she is very motivated. "I'm not happy with the current leadership."

Finding relevant information not easy

Innes has voted in past federal elections, but this time around he too is undecided. One of the problems, he said, is that the parties don't make it easy.

"Aboriginal issues have not been forefront in the election, which is surprising considering the Truth and Reconciliation Commission just submitted its recommendations. Missing and murdered indigenous women have been up front," he said.

That's left both Martell and Innes searching the party platforms, and using tools like CBC's Vote Compass, to try and figure out which party best represents indigenous voters. Martell said she is also looking at history for some clues.

"I look at the Liberal parties past and I can't forget some things. You know I have to mention the white paper."

The white paper refers to a Liberal policy introduced in the late 1960s that proposed the end of the special legal relationship between aboriginal people and the state, dismantling the Indian Act.

Beyond working to try and understand which party to vote for, Innes and Martell also grapple with the idea of supporting a system that some believe oppresses aboriginal people.

But this time, Innes said, he's heeding the call of First Nations leaders, and he said he believes a lot of other indigenous voters will too.

"I think people want to vote in this election more than ever."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/the-undecided-some-indigenous-voters-in-saskatoon-are-still-searching-1.3272799>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

Honour treaty rights, counter climate change: Opinion

[Chrystal Mantyka-Pringle](#)

[David Schindler](#)

[Clinton Westman](#)

[Andrew Kythreotis](#)

Published on: October 10, 2015 | Last Updated: October 10, 2015 6:01 AM MDT



Chief Dolly Abraham, right, from Tatla Lake First Nations, holds a declaration as supporters march along Burrard Street to the offices of Enbridge in Vancouver on Dec. 2, 2010. Jason Payne / PNG

All summer long, we've seen the price of oil collapsing and wildfires raging in Western Canada. With "Godzilla El Niño" looming and international political leaders meeting in Paris this December to thrash out a legally binding climate agreement, there's never been a more important time to demand our leaders act on climate change.

Over the last decade, the Harper government has gutted environmental regulation, fast-tracked pipeline development and accelerated exploitation of oilsands and heavy oil. Without strong enough alternatives from the main opposition parties, we must elect real climate leaders on Oct. 19 and make the rapid transition to renewable energy required to diversify our economy and combat climate change.

One way is to rethink the impact of Canada's non-renewable energy development on the environment and First Nations. In a new commentary published in [Nature Climate Change](#), we outline how honouring treaty rights in the oilsands area is a vital first step to addressing climate change. Only the combination of increased energy sustainability, climate responsibility and equity, counterbalancing social benefits will help Canada globally reposition itself as a nation that can be proud of its environmental record.

The existing treaties and rights were recognized and affirmed in Canada's Constitution in 1982. But those rights remain largely undefined and subject to interpretations by the courts, leaving aboriginal people in limbo. One matter of general agreement and of foremost importance to northern First Nations is protection of livelihood rights such as hunting, fishing and trapping recognized in the treaties.

Oilsands exploitation in northern Alberta is an excellent example: It constitutes a de facto breach of the rights guaranteed in Treaty 8. Habitat destruction has caused declining populations of woodland caribou and other species used for subsistence. Air, water, soil, game, plants and fish are being contaminated with mercury and other toxins emitted by the oilsands industry, jeopardizing human health. The increasing incidence of fish malformations, a long-standing complaint from aboriginal communities, has recently been confirmed by scientific analysis by researchers from the University of Lethbridge and the University of Guelph.

One alternative to oilsands expansion would be to use some of the current oil production to move beyond total reliance on extraction industries to support development and renewable energy projects within smaller communities, including First Nations like the recent solar project in the Lubicon Lake band of Little Buffalo. Such developments could alleviate high unemployment and aid the transition toward an economy not so heavily dependent on resource extraction.

Of course, First Nations should be full partners in such developments. In accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, policy-makers must also respect the right of First Nations to say no to development on their traditional territories. Educational programs could be offered to help aboriginal communities to become more directly involved in developing local industries, as well as in the environmental monitoring and assessment necessary to trust that developments are not harming the environment. With First Nations participation, Canada and Alberta could also empower a treaty commissioner and a Métis rights commissioner with considerable authority to address disputes over lands, livelihood, and governance.

First Nations will often choose environmental protection over economic development, therefore slowing down industrial activity. Perhaps this is a good thing, when politicians expect economies to continue to expand despite the fact that humans are already exceeding Earth's capacity. Honouring existing treaties may be one way by which Canada can begin to curb its greenhouse gas emissions safely and equitably, and for Canada to redress its global reputation for environmental performance and treatment of indigenous peoples.

Chrystal Mantyka-Pringle, PhD, is a conservation biologist and post-doctoral research fellow at the University of Saskatchewan whose work focuses on climate change and land-use change conservation issues. David Schindler is Killam Memorial Professor of Ecology emeritus at the University of Alberta and one of the world's leading freshwater ecologists. Clinton Westman is an environmental anthropologist and associate professor at the University of Saskatchewan, whose ethnographic research focuses on aboriginal communities in northern Alberta. Andrew Kythreotis, PhD, is a lecturer and research fellow at Cardiff University, U.K. whose work focuses on climate change policy and governance.

Direct Link: <http://edmontonjournal.com/news/politics/honour-treaty-rights-counter-climate-change-opinion>

Lubicon Cree Nation turns to solar power to end fossil fuel nightmare

By [Melina Laboucan-Massimo](#) October 13, 2015



In a community of 500 people in northern Alberta, a 20.8 kiloWatt solar installation has been set up to power the First Nation's health centre and put additional energy back in to the grid. The Indigenous community of the Lubicon Cree used to be self-sufficient and able to live off the land. Now the community deals with contaminated water, polluted air and a compromised landscape. In 2011, the community dealt with [one of the largest oil spills in Alberta's history](#).

After dealing with three decades of intensive oil, gas, logging, fracking and tar sands exploitation in our homeland, my community of Little Buffalo has chosen to forge a new future and become powered by the sun. First Nation communities have been on the front lines of resource extraction for far too long, and we have paid dearly for the price of humanity's addiction to oil, but we have hope that we will find a way out of the crisis we are currently facing in Alberta and around the world.

Refusing to be victims in this game of fossil fuel roulette, communities like Little Buffalo are leading the way towards energy independence -- making [The Leap](#) towards a new future that some of our leading thinkers say everyone else must follow.

Despite being the oil capital of Canada, solar energy is taking off in Alberta. Albertans want to see change, and solar is huge part of making that change happen, but we need to demand this change. A just transition needs to happen not only in communities that can afford renewable technology, but it must begin to happen in communities facing the brunt of the environmental, social, and health implications from the extractive industry and climate change.

This [solar installation](#) in Little Buffalo was done mostly by community members, who have never installed a solar project before. Now they can use these new skills to install more solar around Alberta.



However, these types of renewable energy project shouldn't rest on the shoulders of communities to implement alone, they should be supported by governments around the world that have instead given immense subsidies that have supported the aging fossil fuel industry for decades. Countries like Canada need to accelerate the transition from destructive, climate polluting energy sources like the tar sands towards the green, just energy economy so many of our communities so desperately want, and need, to see.

The time to act on the growing climate crisis is getting shorter by the day. Our communities deserves justice. For many of us from impacted communities the choices are literally life and death. It's time Canada stopped burying its head and brought about the just transition.

Energy democracy can be built through the decentralisation of our energy grid where people are no longer subject to the woes of the boom and bust economies of fossil fuels, and where the oils and gas lobby no longer runs our governments.

The fossil fuel regime makes us think we need to remain dependent, but when we decentralize our power we create energy independence in our communities and countries.

We need to separate oil and state which is driving us to the brink of climate catastrophe. Instead what we need to see is a world run by [100 per cent renewable energy by 2050](#), where communities own their own power and can build a just society which will help save our planet and life here on Mother Earth.

Everyone and every roof can be a part of the solar solution. Solar energy production is oil-spill proof. Canada should aim higher and set a goal and commit to 100 per cent of its power coming from renewable energy just has been outlined in the recent Green Peace [report](#) of 100 per cent Renewables.

Even in the heart of the tar sands we can build a different kind of economy with clean energy and green jobs without compromising our families and communities. But a just transition needs to prioritise communities like First Nations that are already impacted by dirty fossil fuels. A just transition means our communities will no longer be sacrifice zones.

We are seeing Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike galvanised by the sun. Please stand with us -- nd help build a positive solution-based economy across this globe. We must do it now without waiting for governments to decide to do this for us.

The solar panels in my community will still be standing even when the last oil project is finished. I think it is time that this change is made across the planet - especially in places like Alberta tar sands. Panel by panel communities will show politicians what true leadership is.

We've been looking down far too long and digging the bottom of the barrel in dirty fossil fuels. We must now turn our gaze towards the sun and realise the true energy potential that is available to us here and now. We must choose to build healthy vibrant communities before it is too late.

Melina Laboucan-Massimo is a member of the Lubicon Cree First Nation and one of the founding organizers of the Tar Sands Healing Walk.

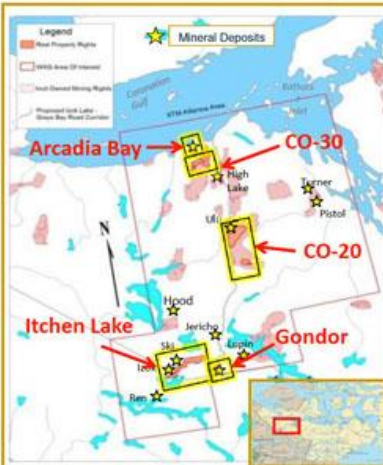
Direct Link: <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/views-expressed/2015/10/lubicon-cree-nation-turns-to-solar-power-to-end-fossil-fuel-n>

Inuit-owned firm explores for minerals in western Nunavut

Nunavut Resources Corp. teams up with Transition Metals Corp.

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, October 15, 2015 - 8:28 am

Property	Size	Exploration Opportunity
Itchen Lake	198	BIF gold, along strike of Lupin Mine (3.36 Moz @ ~9.3 g/t Au)
Gondor	45	Surrounds Gondor Lake (7.3 Mt grading 4.8% Zn, 46 g/t Ag)
Arcadia Bay	36	Surrounds known deposit (1 Mt @ 6.41 g/t Au)
CO-30	149	Gold/VMS, close to High Lake; samples up to 117.43 g/t Au
CO-20	248	Gold/VMS, bordering Ulu; samples up to 29.4 g/t Au / 4.5 m ddh
Subtotal	676 km²	



This map, taken from a Transition Metals Corp. presentation to investors, shows the land parcels in the western Kitikmeot region that the company hopes to explore in an alliance with the Inuit-owned Nunavut Resources Corp.

An alliance between the Inuit-owned Nunavut Resource Corp. and a Sudbury, Ont.-based company called Transition Metals Corp. has turned up potential sites for gold and base metal exploration following aerial surveys on Inuit-owned land done this past summer, Transition Metals said Oct. 8 in a news release.

In April 2013, the two firms struck a deal to work together for five years hunting for potential mineral deposits within an area known as the Izok Corridor.

The Izok Corridor is an area stretching from Izok Lake to Coronation Gulf that's the proposed location for a moribund scheme promoted by MMG Ltd. to build a chain of lead-zinc mines linked by an all-weather road.

[MMG halted that project](#) in 2013 because of low metal prices and there's [no sign that MMG will restart it any time soon.](#)

But Transition Metals, who aim to spend at least \$18 million on exploration through their deal with Nunavut Resource Corp., says Nunavut is a great place to do business.

“At a time when exploration activity in the North is at a low, the Alliance is positioning itself for success by adding value to its projects with excellent support from the Kitikmeot Inuit Association,” Transition Metals’ CEO, Scott McLean, said in a news release.

The company, whose stock was trading at less than 10 cents a share as of Oct. 14, says Nunavut is a “safe, stable, mining friendly jurisdiction,” with “no land claim issues” and that their deal with Inuit landowners gives them social licence.

In 2014, the alliance struck a mineral exploration deal with Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. for two parcels of land on which Inuit hold sub-surface rights in an area called C-20 near the Ulu gold property, about 175 kilometres southwest of Cambridge Bay.

Their release says their aerial survey last summer revealed “high potential gold and base metal target areas within the north portion of Inuit Owned Land parcel IOL CO-20.”

Although the exploration work is in its earliest stages, Charlie Evalik, the president and chair of Nunavut Resource Corp., said he’s happy with the work of the alliance.

“We continue to be pleased with the good work that the alliance is executing for the benefit of Inuit. We are also extremely appreciative of the ongoing support provided by our shareholder, the Kitikmeot Inuit Association,” Evalik said.

Evalik also described his company as the “only active 100 per cent Inuit-owned exploration business.”

At the recent KIA annual general meeting in Cambridge Bay, delegates heard how the past year [marks one of “the slowest periods for the exploration”](#) industry in the Kitikmeot region in 15 years.”

Direct Link: <http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit-owned-firm-explores-for-minerals-in-western-nunavut/>

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

Cree community looks on warily as De Beers scours North for diamonds

With De Beers’ Victor Mine near Attawapiskat approaching the end of its lifespan, the company is looking farther north — causing a stir in Peawanuck, where residents are concerned about protecting their traditional lands.



Weenusk First Nation, also known as Peawanuck, is a fly-in community near Hudson Bay, more than 1,300 kilometres north of Toronto. It is home to nearly 300 Cree.

By: [Tanya Talaga](#) Global Economics Reporter, Published on Sat Oct 10 2015

WEENUSK FIRST NATION, ONT.—From a height of 300 metres, Jennifer Wabano looks out the window of the eight-seat float plane as it approaches the Winisk River watershed.

Wabano, a mother of 10, watches the mesmerizing landscape of the Hudson Bay Lowlands. String bogs resembling giant tiger stripes splashed across the land stretch for miles before giving way to fields of pristine, lime-green peatland that is thousands of years old. Scattered throughout the peat are hundreds of freshwater lakes of all shapes and sizes that were formed a millennium ago by retreating glaciers.

The lowlands are one of the world's last untouched carbon storehouses, trapping the gases that warm the globe at an increasingly alarming rate. Bald eagles nest along the banks of the Winisk River. In summer, polar bears wander through town in search of food. Brook trout are caught in the mud flats of Hudson Bay. Migratory caribou and moose are staples in this community that continues to depend on the land for its existence.

Wabano looks down to where her ancestors — the Omushkegowak, or the people of the muskeg — roamed for nearly 4,000 years, and she thinks about the wolves at the door.



Jennifer Wabano enters her father's smokehouse in Peawanuck. The mother of 10 opposes diamond mining on her people's traditional lands.

At the start of this year, a team from De Beers, one of the world's largest diamond mining companies, came to Weenusk First Nation, also known as Peawanuck, to hold an information session with the nearly 300 Cree who call this remote, fly-in community home.

De Beers and its partners operate in 20 countries across five continents. They pull 600,000 carats of diamonds annually out of the company's current Ontario operation — the Victor Mine, 90 kilometres west of [Attawapiskat First Nation](#).

Most living in Weenusk, a reserve with just one store, undrinkable water and a school that goes only to Grade 8, are uninterested in whatever De Beers is selling.

“This is my family’s traditional territory. It connects to the Winisk River,” says Wabano. “My ancestors, my grandfathers, used this land and the rivers and we haven’t stopped using it.



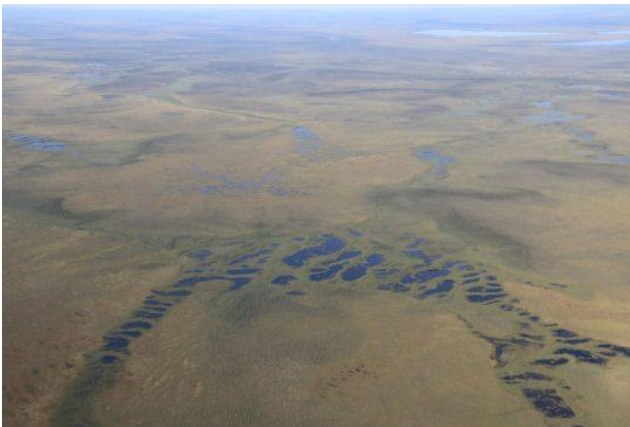
There is only one store in Peawanuck.

“We do not consent to have any mining on our traditional lands.”

But the open pit Victor mine will reach the end of its lifespan in four years and De Beers is fanning out across the North, searching for diamonds buried beneath the fragile ecosystem of the Hudson Bay Lowlands.

Exploration, of all types, leaves a mark.

“There are impacts right now from exploration and no one is checking those,” says Anna Baggio, director of conservation planning for the Wildlands League, a chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. “There is clearing of the land; big machines being brought in are being dragged across the landscape — creating ruts and deep grooves, disrupting the soil. Lines are being cut through ecosystems, changing the way certain species live in those areas.”



The Hudson Bay Lowlands — including string bogs and peatlands — are one of the world's last untouched carbon storehouses.

The company currently has no mining claims in Peawanuck, says Tom Ormsby, De Beers Canada's director of external and corporate affairs. "But when we have areas of interest, we try to arrange community meetings to tell them what we'd like to do."

Weenusk, more than 1,300 kilometres north of Toronto, is accessible only by canoe, small plane or, in winter, by a frozen highway to Fort Severn.

The traditional way of life is mixed with modern conveniences. The clapboard-siding houses are well kept. There is Wi-Fi but it is spotty. Fishing nets hang on clotheslines. Meat is smoked in large teepees of white canvas and blue tarp. All-terrain vehicles buzz up and down the streets. In summer, white salt is thrown over the dirt roads to stop the dust from kicking up.

The Cree here share a culture with the Cree along the James Bay coast. Theirs is a rich history: stories of Vikings in the Far North and of age-old wars against the Chippewa, of eight generations who have camped at Holly Lake — a large, inland body hundreds of kilometres south near the English River.



Heavy freighter canoes able to withstand stormy weather are used by those who live in Peawanuck to travel the Winisk river.

Everyone and everything in the North is connected. But not everyone agrees on mining or development.

Sam Hunter, a Cree Indian guide, is wary, fearing his community is not equipped to handle the mining giant's intentions.

"They are interested in our rivers. I don't know where," says Hunter, who makes his living ferrying tourists up the Hudson Bay coastline to see polar bears. The whiff of interest by De Beers has caused a stir in this community, fuelling a seemingly timeless debate — how the old ways will change if a mining firm comes to town.

Hunter is now trying to learn the language of mining: What constitutes a land proposal? What exactly are exploration claims? How do business agreements work?

He has approached the band council to better understand its land use plans, but “it has been a struggle since day one,” he says. “There is no plan devised including youth or elders. Meetings dissolve. Our people have a right to know the issues.”

Chief Edmund Hunter says De Beers has been in the community twice and wants to hold a third information session. It’s difficult, Hunter says, because some of the youth want development “for their future.”

At the beginning of July, Sam Hunter tried to put up posters advertising Victoria Lean’s documentary *After the Last River*, a critical look at the benefits De Beers brought to Attawapiskat. They were taken down. He doesn’t know who did it.



Cree guide Sam Hunter, who makes his living taking tourists to see polar bears on the coast of Hudson Bay, fears the impact of diamond mining on traditional lands.

In January, band council member Georgina Pepan told De Beers it should not be “entertaining any thoughts of mining on our land.”

The land still provides.

“I remember, as a girl, the first time I shot a goose. I was so proud. As a custom, I went to go feed my grandmother. Little things like that is what I try to teach my own children.”

What are De Beers’ intentions in Weenusk?

Diamond mines aren’t forever, and within four years the Victor Mine, De Beers’ first in Ontario, is expected to reach the end of its life.



The Victor Mine is [one of the richest diamond mines in the western world](#) and an important part of the De Beers empire. Just east of the mine is Attawapiskat, one of the most poverty-stricken First Nations communities in the province.

The reserve of 1,900 people, on the shores of the Attawapiskat River along the James Bay coast, has had recurring states of emergency due to flooding. The floods have caused a housing crisis and many band members are still crowded into makeshift, mouldy homes without plumbing. It took years for a new school to be built after it was discovered that the previous school had been built on top of ground soaked by a massive diesel spill in 1979.



The majority of those living in Peawanuck are under age 25.

De Beers, the only major industry operating in this remote area, has paid the provincial government \$40.7 million in taxes and other payments since the opening of the mine. It also pays up to \$2 million a year in royalties to Attawapiskat. That payment is split between a trust fund controlled by the chief and council and the rest, which is used for community development and to pay Attawapiskat members who manage the band's impact benefit agreement with De Beers, says Attawapiskat member Charlie Hookimaw.

The trust fund now totals \$13 million. In 2014, the community received about \$1 million; \$480,000 went to business relations and \$545,868 was spent on community development, Hookimaw says.

Between 35 and 40 per cent of the mine's labour is aboriginal, mostly hired from Attawapiskat, says Tom Ormsby, De Beers Canada's director of external and corporate affairs. And many local businesses receive spinoff contracts.

The diamonds from Ontario's Far North have the second-highest value per carat in the world and are a hallmark of De Beers' ethical diamonds commitment, each piece sourced in a "sustainable and ethical manner," according to the company website.

De Beers, which in May put South Africa's Kimberley Mine — the original mine on which Cecil Rhodes built his diamond empire — up for sale, is now focused on Canada. It opened both the Snap Lake Mine in the Northwest Territories and the Victor Mine in 2008. Currently, De Beers is constructing the world's largest new diamond mine at Gahcho Kue in the Northwest Territories.

With Victor's end in sight, De Beers, which produces 35 per cent of the world's rough diamonds, is searching for new sources. It hopes to build on its \$1-billion infrastructure investment at the Victor Mine by opening Tango, a new mine seven kilometres away. The environmental assessments are still underway.

De Beers has not placed exploration stakes near or outside Peawanuck, which the Cree claim as their traditional territory, but all areas of the North are being investigated.



Polar bears come down from their northern habitat to the waters of Hudson Bay in the summer in search of food.

"We look across the whole region. We look at possibilities and there are various stages of gathering information on the target area we have an interest in. We want to see what is out there and that is what I understand is our engagement in the area," Ormsby says.

Diamond exploration is a slow process — De Beers was in Ontario for 50 years before it opened Victor.

"We'd like to try some early exploration at some point. We would be in the area for four weeks to take some samples," Ormsby says. "If there is enough data in the samples, then we would return. If there is potential, we would return. It is baby steps, really."

It is beneficial — although not legally required — for mining companies to negotiate impact benefit agreements with local First Nations. An IBA outlines the intention of the project, the responsibilities of the company and the community's share in economic benefits. These agreements are often seen as legally binding and arise from memos of understanding.

After an information session in Weenusk in January, De Beers wanted to stage a second one in June, but it was cancelled.

“Every community has its own process,” says Ormsby. “You go in on invitation of the community. Unfortunately, the community informed us that the meeting could not take place. We understand that is part of the process. We'll stay in touch.”

First Nations involvement is essential to working in the North, he says.

Most of the Hudson Bay Lowlands is undeveloped and physically inaccessible without the help of First Nations communities, which can have airstrips, power and rudimentary supplies.



A sweat lodge on the banks of the Winisk River — the traditional territory of the Cree who live in Peawanuck.

“We prefer to do this up front. It is much better when people are aligned with understanding,” Ormsby says. “We have worked in the area for so long, we understand each community understands it in their own way. Then the decisions that are made are the best for everybody.”

The Victor Mine: A case study

Toronto-based conservationists at the Wildlands League have been investigating the long-term consequences of De Beers' Victor site, studying hundreds of pages of environmental assessments and freedom of information documents, and seeking feedback from the Ministry of the Environment.

- Monitoring

What the league says: Trevor Hesselink, the league's director of policy and research, has concluded that De Beers' environmental monitoring record at the Victor Mine is dubious at best and that the provincial Environment Ministry has failed to monitor the mine.

What De Beers and the ministry say: De Beers is required to conduct extensive groundwater, surface water and ground subsidence monitoring, says Kate Jordan, a spokesperson for the ministry. "An extensive monitoring program was established by De Beers and approved by the ministry to test and evaluate predicted effects on the ecological system," Jordan says.

- Reporting

What the league says: None of the required annual mercury performance monitoring reports from 2008 to 2014 contained data from two specific monitoring stations — one being the ultimate downstream station from the mine, according to freedom of information documents and De Beers' annual reports. This means that for six years, Ontario was not given all the information the province required concerning water samples, Hesselink says.

"When you add up all the mercury requirements they are supposed to do just for this creek alone (Granny Creek), never mind the rest of the landscape, they just barely meet the halfway point in terms of reporting requirements — 19 out of 36 data points and the ministry didn't notice," he says.

What the ministry says: The ministry denies this. Jordan says data isn't kept on a strictly station-by-station basis but clumped into groups.

"Water quality data for both the North and South Granny Creek have been reported in annual mercury monitoring reports. The data provided in the company's annual report is not presented on a station-by-station basis. Data has been clumped comparing stations upstream of the mine site to those downstream of key features," Jordan says.

Regarding the league's concerns with the 2013 and 2014 mercury reports, Jordan says "dialogue is pending the review of the reports by technical staff."

- Daily water draining

What the league says: Of special concern is the daily dumping of up to 150 million litres of water from the Victor pit into the Attawapiskat River since the marshlands must be dry in order to use drilling equipment and access the diamond-bearing ore.

What the ministry says: While the permit allows a maximum water taking of 150 million litres per day from the pit, Jordan says the daily average is closer to 79 million litres per day. "The data collected to date does not indicate that pit dewatering activities carried out at the site or the discharge of mine water to the Attawapiskat River is increasing mercury concentrations in the receiving waters or adjacent peat lands," Jordan says.

What De Beers says: “We’ve been below the permit levels since we’ve had them.”

- Wetlands and bogs

What the league says: The boreal peat bogs of the Hudson Bay Lowlands store carbon at higher concentration densities than almost anywhere on Earth. When you dry out the peat moss in order to build a mine, you are mobilizing the stored mercury and carbon, says Hesselink. When drilled peat bogs are exposed to the elements, they decompose, evaporate and release carbon into the atmosphere.

What De Beers says: There has been no impact from the activity of the mine, but there are mitigation plans in place in case there is. The company has five different universities studying the impacts of mining. “We are the first development in the area. We made a number of commitments; for example, we have been examining peat in subarctic climates,” says Tom

We carry out all these things and these come to the table when we have discussions,” says De Beers Canada’s Tom Ormsby.

- Waste rock

What the league says:

De Beers has been approved to mine as deep as 230 metres, but Hesselink says there is a “substantial discrepancy” between what is identified in the federal environmental assessment study and how deep the company claims to be digging. The fear is that the waste rock taken out of the pit contains relatively high levels of sulphate, which increases with depth. Once piled around the mine it can act as a trigger that converts the mercury already present in the wetlands into the toxic methylmercury.

What De Beers says: The working depth of the mine was federally approved at 280 metres, says Ormsby.

“The way the environmental process works, at least for Victor, it was a federal review first. The federal minister signed off (in August 2005) and then the Ontario government signed off. The province signed off in October 2005 and the community ratified it in November 2005.

“We submitted what the mine plan would be to the end of life of the mine. There is no change to that scope at all, or otherwise we would have to resubmit ... My understanding is it has always been to 280,” says Ormsby.

- Mercury

What the league says: Methylmercury is a bioaccumulating neurotoxin. It enters the base of the food chain, and is passed upward to the fish and then to the mammals that eat

them, including humans. It can cause devastating neurological effects and cognitive problems, with children and women of child-bearing age being particularly at risk. Hesselink says De Beers is dumping sulphate into the Attawapiskat without understanding the effects of what it will do.

What the ministry says: Jordan says that monitoring “shows no change to any mercury levels found in fish in the Attawapiskat River due to dewatering.”

What De Beers says: Ormsby says mercury in rivers has been a concern since well before De Beers arrived in northern Ontario. “It is a naturally occurring thing, in the peatlands. It is from coal-fired plants. It settles into peat and bog and any time it is dry, it is released naturally,” he says.

- Communications

What the league says: Hesselink says that emails and requests for meetings sent to the ministry have been met with “dead silence.” “We have essentially flagged for them violations of permits, which is a very significant public concern, in a fairly credible and well-researched way, and we are getting nothing back,” says Hesselink.

What the ministry says: There has been dialogue between the league and the ministry since 2004 regarding potential environmental impacts associated with the project, Jordan says.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2015/10/10/cree-community-looks-on-warily-as-de-beers-eyes-new-diamond-mine.html>

First Nations content with biosolids deal, fight not over

Agreement reached with province, five Nicola Valley First Nations

Posted On: Friday, October 9th, 2015 | 4:38pm PDT

Story by: Chad Klassen

For the first time in months, there may be some peace in the contentious issue of biosolids in the Nicola Valley. After months of protests against biosolids, leading to a moratorium on the human sludge in the region, the province and five Nicola Valley First Nations have come to an agreement on how to deal with the issue.

The agreement will include scientific testing of the biosolids, and next week, the First Nations Chiefs will meet with the province to discuss the type of testing that will be done on the biosolids and who will be conducting it.

Friends of the Nicola Valley, a group that's also been front and centre of the protests, was left out of the agreement, although the group says it will still be involved in the testing.

But at the core of this contention is Aboriginal title, with the Nicola Valley First Nations wanting the final say on what happens on their land.

The First Nations says if the agreement isn't honoured by government, it won't be afraid to reignite protests and blockades.

Direct Link: <http://www.cfjctv.com/story.php?id=24408>

Re-elected Harper government would introduce on-reserve private property ownership on band by band basis

[National News](#) | October 9, 2015 by [APTN National News](#)



APTN National News

RICHMOND, BC—A Conservative government would allow First Nation bands to implement private property ownership on their reserve lands on an opt-in basis, according to the party's platform unveiled Friday.

The Conservative platform says a Stephen Harper-led government would immediately move to introduce legislation, requested and influenced by the Whispering Pines-Clinton Indian Band in British Columbia, to introduce a property ownership regime on-reserve.

A Conservative government would introduce similar legislation for any additional First Nations that would want to follow the same path, the platform said.

“A re-elected Conservative government will enact legislation that allows this specific band to move forward in this way,” said the platform document. “If other First Nation bands also choose to pursue this option on a voluntary, opt-in basis, we’ll proceed with similar legislation for them.”

The chief of the Whispering Pines-Clinton Indian Band is quoted in the platform document saying the proposed legislation is “First Nations-led.” Chief Michael LeBourdais says his First Nation created the proposed property ownership legislation, according to the document.

“We want what other Canadians have: title we can leave to our future generations,” said LeBourdais, according to the document.

The Conservative platform also says that while the First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act is now dead, the Harper government would now try to strike deals with provinces and First Nations on education.

The Conservative platform states that the Harper government’s response to the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission would include directing the Mental Health Commission of Canada to focus on addiction and suicide prevention in First Nation communities, direct palliative care research funding to services directed at First Nations, increase broadband Internet access to Indigenous communities and expand anti-gang programs along with increasing funding for Indigenous languages by \$10 million over four years.

The Conservatives would add 40 communities to the Nutrition North program. The costing document states the program would get an extra \$32 million over four years. A Conservative government would also require all northern retailers to use a point-of-sale system so customers can see how the program subsidy applies to the foods they’ve purchased.

The Conservative party pledges in the platform to complete devolution of land and resource powers to the Nunavut government over four years.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/10/09/re-elected-harper-government-would-introduce-on-reserve-private-property-ownership-on-band-by-band-basis/>

Conservatives promise to allow First Nations to convert property to fee simple-like structure

By: [Cam Fortems](#) in [Federal Election](#), [Federal Politics](#), [News](#) October 9, 2015

The Conservative government has promised to bring in legal changes that would allow First Nations to convert property to a fee simple-like structure.

Conservative candidate Cathy McLeod pledged on Friday that a re-elected Stephen Harper government would bring in legislative changes allowing Whispering Pines Indian Band to be the first in Canada to adopt the new system.

“If other First Nation bands also choose to pursue this option on a voluntary, opt-in basis, we’ll proceed with similar legislation for them” states the Conservative proposal in the party’s platform.

Whispering Pines Chief Mike Lebourdais said his band wants to pioneer the concept in Canada that would become an alternative to the current reserve system, under which band members who want housing enter a lottery under Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, which arranges financing. While certificates of possession can be obtained and exist, Lebourdais said transfer of those titles can take years and construction of homes on those lands cannot be conventionally financed.

If the amendments are made and adopted, Lebourdais said his members, or anyone else, will be able to buy reserve land, obtain title and arrange a mortgage through any commercial lender.

It will give First Nations people ability to grow equity, which is not possible under the current reserve land system.

“It looks a lot like the Canadian system, but the underlying title is First Nations,” Lebourdais said, noting anyone would be able to purchase reserve lands, which will have title similar to fee simple and its taxable value assessed. A significant difference, however, is property taxes will be paid to the respective band.

“My best friend is from Bonaparte. I can’t sell him an acre of my land so he can build a house and live beside me and we can grow old together,” said the longtime chief and former head of the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council. “We can’t do that because the Indian Act prohibits it.”

Lebourdais said employment is high among band members, adding many choose to build off-reserve due to the benefits of the fee-simple system and its ability to allow homeowners to accrue equity and borrow against it.

The proposal is the result of years of groundwork, including by former Tk’emlups Indian Band chief Manny Jules in his position as head of the First Nations Tax Commission. Lebourdais and other First Nations leaders interested in the proposal met with senior Conservative ministers and the prime minister.

Lebourdais credits the Conservative government with encouraging the groundwork and backing it as a campaign promise.

“Cathy McLeod was instrumental in setting up meetings to get this initiative in front of government,” he said, “She has been supportive right from the beginning.”

Lebourdais is not certain if support will be extended by other parties.

“I’m curious to see who else supports it,” he said. “I think the NDP will.”

Lebourdais said First Nations leaders met with Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau, “who knows about it.”

Direct Link: <http://www.kamloopsthisweek.com/conservatives-promise-to-allow-first-nations-to-convert-property-to-fee-simple-like-structure/>

More than half of B.C.'s First Nations involved in treaty process, commission says

THE CANADIAN PRESS October 13, 2015



The B.C. Treaty Commission says more than half of the province’s First Nations have completed treaties or are participating in the process.

VANCOUVER — Members of a group that oversees treaties in British Columbia say they’re guiding more First Nations than ever through the process, but the provincial government must appoint a new leader to guide them forward.

The B.C. Treaty Commission released its annual report Tuesday, showing that 65 First Nations — 52 per cent of all First Nations in the province — have completed treaties or are moving toward that goal.

“This really highlights the success of the process in British Columbia,” said acting chief commissioner Celeste Haldane of the commission that was established 22 years ago.

Four First Nations have signed preliminary agreements in the past fiscal year, including the Tsimshian First Nations, which includes the Kitselas and Kitsumkalum nations, the Wuikinuxv Nation and the Te’mexw Treaty Association.

Haldane said the commission has focused on several issues this year while working with an independent firm to determine the socio-economic impacts of treaties on First Nations.

The study has been ongoing for three years and involves interviews of First Nations, including some that have completed treaties, others that are in final negotiations and some that have not participated in the process.

“Some of the analysis is that clearly there are significant positive economic benefits when a nation is out from under the Indian Act and implementing their own governance moving forward,” Haldane said.

The commission has also been working on how to resolve overlapping land claims and is looking at possibly creating an expert panel to help deal with disputes.

“First Nations are best poised to resolve these issues amongst themselves with the support and the dedication of the treaty commission,” Haldane said.

But having a dedicated leader will be key to the group’s future work, said commissioner Jerry Lampert.

“We’re very troubled by the fact that we have not seen progress in appointing a chief commissioner,” he said.

Former Liberal cabinet minister George Abbott was set to succeed then-chief commissioner Sophie Pierre on April 1, but Premier Christy Clark and her cabinet cancelled Abbott’s appointment.

Clark said in March that she wanted the treaty process to go in a different direction.

“I don’t understand B.C.’s rationale for not wanting to appoint a chief commissioner,” Lampert said. Because the (treaty) process is going to continue.“

Read more:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/business/more+than+half+first+nations+involved+treaty+process+commission+says/11434761/story.html#ixzz3ofdpXgLB>

First Nations group preparing legal challenge to LNG project in Prince Rupert

by [Martin MacMahon](#)

Posted Oct 14, 2015 12:27 pm PDT



VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) – Our province’s [annual LNG conference](#) has attracted 300 industry stakeholders, but opposition remains.

A First Nations group is set to ask the court to block aspects of a project in Prince Rupert.

The house of Luutkudziiwus within the [Gitxsan](#) nation is set to ask for a judicial review related to the [Pacific North West Liquefied Natural Gas](#) proposed project over concerns local salmon populations would take a hit.

Richard Wright with the house says the review would aim to overturn the environmental certificate and construction approval for the project. He says the issue is a lack of information and consultation.

“We’d have to take into consideration future generations of the Gitxsan people. We need more research. We need more information to be able to make that decision.”

Wright insists a settlement isn’t the aim.

“For them to just throw a pile of cash on the table and essentially say, ‘Have you been consulted?’ That wouldn’t go over too well with us,” he tells us.

The house plans to formally request the BC Supreme Court’s intervention within a month’s time.

Direct Link: <http://www.news1130.com/2015/10/14/first-nations-challenge-lng/>

Columbia River Treaty Must Address Climate Change and First Nations' Needs



Photo Credit: BC Hydro via BC Government.

October 13, 2015 by [Cassandra Jeffery](#)

A public workshop on the future of the Columbia River Treaty held in Osoyoos has found that the Treaty must be modified to meet the needs of First Nations, growing population numbers, increasing competition for water; fisheries health and environmental values, as well as negative impacts on Canadian agriculture and the impact of a changing climate.

Organized by the Canadian Water Resource Association (CWRA) and the Adaptation to Climate Change Team (ACT), the workshop took place on Wednesday, October 7th at the Sonora Centre.

The event incorporated a variety of featured presentations from local and provincial government, First Nations, and academia.

Grand Chief of the Okanagan Nation and President of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, Stewart Phillip, called for a renegotiation of the aging Treaty to ensure First Nations' participation, and ultimately, consent in future negotiations.

“In the face of the devastation of climate change, it is crucial for the sake of our grandchildren and their grandchildren that the eco-system, including ensuring salmon passage to the Upper Columbia, become central to any new Treaty,” added Phillip.

First Nations were originally excluded from the Treaty, and the original assessment of impacts greatly underestimated the loss to fisheries and ecosystems in the region, according to workshop co-organizer Dr. Brian Guy of the CWRA.

“The prospect of a changing climate will have profound effects on the timing and quantity of river flows, such that overall water security will become a paramount issue on both sides of the international border,” said Co-convenor Deborah Harford, Executive Director of ACT.

Other key points addressed in the workshop include:

- Renegotiation of the Columbia River Treaty needs to be an inclusive process, involving local populations and First Nations on both sides of the border;
- The Columbia River Treaty needs to have enough flexibility to address climate and hydrologic change;
- Fisheries, fish passage, and fish habitat must be enhanced throughout the Columbia River Basin (including the Okanagan River);
- There is an opportunity to broaden discussions for an international agreement that covers the entire Columbia Basin, including the Okanagan and Similkameen River Basins, based on the successes achieved with other international agreements such as the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, and the recently concluded Northwest Territories-Alberta trans-boundary agreement on the Mackenzie River.

Moving forward, a neutral convenor is expected to monitor progress on treaty negotiations to ensure that the concerns and interests expressed in Wednesday's workshop are considered.

A progress report on this initiative will be reported to a national CWRA meeting in 2017, which will focus on trans-boundary agreements.

For more information as to what the Columbia River Treaty entails, click [here](#).

Direct Link:

https://www.kelownanow.com/watercooler/news/news/Provincial/15/10/13/Columbia_River_Treaty_Must_Address_Climate_Change_and_First_Nations/

3 Yukon First Nations file court challenge over Bill S-6, as promised

Amendments to Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Act breach land claim agreements, says suit

By Nancy Thomson, [CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 14, 2015 6:56 PM CT Last Updated: Oct 15, 2015 11:06 AM CT



From left: Steve Smith, chief of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations; Eric Fairclough, chief of Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation, and Carl Sidney, chief of Teslin Tlingit Council. The three First Nations filed suit against the federal government on Wednesday over amendments to YESAA. (Nancy Thomson/CBC)

It's been a long time coming, but today it arrived: a lawsuit provoked by the federal government's amendments to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Act (YESAA).

Three Yukon First Nations — the Teslin Tlingit Council, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, and the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation — filed a petition in Yukon Supreme Court on Wednesday.

Yukon chiefs have vigorously resisted the amendments to YESAA, since Bill S-6 was introduced in the Senate just over a year ago.

They have said the changes violate their land claims agreements, in particular, four controversial amendments that were introduced at the end stages of the consultation process.

"The amendments through Bill S-6 undermine or weaken Yukon's development assessment process and our role as Yukon First Nation governments," said Teslin Tlingit Council chief Carl Sidney.

"They are a clear breach of our final agreements."

Little Salmon Carmacks chief Eric Fairclough said the final agreements are "constitutionally protected" and said First Nations in the Yukon will resist moves by Stephen Harper to "undermine environmental legislation throughout Canada."

The petition was accompanied by affidavits from a total of 11 Yukon chiefs. Fairclough says all First Nations which belong to the Council of Yukon First Nations are helping to pay for the cost of the lawsuit.

Sidney says Yukon First Nations made "huge compromises" to ensure that they have joint management of lands and resources. He says the amendments to YESAA dilutes the the role of First Nations, and they will not accept that.

Gregory McDade, with the Vancouver firm of Ratcliff and Company, said the suit takes exception to "both the process and the principle" of the changes brought about by S-6.

McDade said a case management conference is set for December. He added that the Yukon government may become a respondent if it chooses.

Both the federal government and the Yukon government have maintained that the amendments cannot affect the integrity of the final agreements, saying that in the case of a dispute between YESAA and the final agreements, the agreements will prevail.

McDade says that assessment is "wrong." The lawsuit says "no law enacted by Canada or Yukon is enforceable if it is in conflict or inconsistent with a Final Agreement."

The lawsuit goes on to claim that the amendments "unlawfully permit unilateral delegation by Canada to Yukon of powers and responsibilities."

Both the NDP and the Liberal candidates have said their respective parties would repeal the problematic amendments.

This filing comes just days before the federal election on Monday. The Yukon chiefs say that is simply a coincidence.

Yukon Conservative incumbent Ryan Leef has supported the passage of Bill S-6. He declined to comment on the court action.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/3-yukon-first-nations-file-court-challenge-over-bill-s-6-as-promised-1.3271558>

Metis, non-status Indians push for 'equality and clarity' at Supreme Court

CTVNews.ca Staff

Published Friday, October 9, 2015 8:52AM EDT

Canada's Metis and non-status Indians are hoping their 16-year court case will finally be resolved at the Supreme Court of Canada, where they're pushing for official recognition under the Constitution Act, along with access to all the government programs and services that entails.

Dwight Dorey, National Chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, championed the cause of Metis and non-status Indians at the Supreme Court on Thursday, as he pushed for more "clarity" and "equality" under Section 91 (24) of the Constitution Act.

Dorey is hoping to obtain official status for the estimated 600,000 people he represents. He's also pushing for clarity on whether Metis and non-status Indians fall under the jurisdiction of the federal or provincial governments.



Dwight Dorey, National Chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, speaks to CTV's Canada AM from Winnipeg, on Oct. 9, 2015.

"In the past, federal and provincial governments tend to toss that ball back and forth, so we're looking for clarity through the Supreme Court case," Dorey told CTV's Canada AM on Friday. He added that the push for official status is "a matter of due respect, it's a matter of recognition, and it's a matter of not being forgotten anymore."

Dorey is also pushing for more equality in how the federal government consults with Aboriginal groups. "All aboriginal designated groups and organizations have a right to be consulted and negotiated with," he said.

Section 35 of the Constitution Act reaffirms the rights of Aboriginal people, but it does not define them. Dorey wants to address that, and have Metis and non-status Indians included in the definition.

Dorey says he and his fellow plaintiffs knew the case would take at least 10 years when they launched it, but that 10 years has stretched to 16. He blamed the federal government for the delay, and accused federal officials of trying to get the case thrown out through a series of "blocking attempts" and "legal wranglings."

In 2011, a Federal Court ruled that Metis and non-status Indians fall under federal jurisdiction, but the federal government appealed the case. Three years later, the Federal Court of Appeal ruled that Metis could stay under federal jurisdiction, but non-status Indians could not.

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/metis-non-status-indians-push-for-equality-and-clarity-at-supreme-court-1.2602668>

Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

Plight of aboriginal women sparks heated debate

Mark NIELSEN / Prince George Citizen
October 8, 2015 10:03 PM



Prince George-Peace River-Northern Rockies Conservative candidate Bob Zimmer and NDP candidate Kathi Dickie debate during an all-candidates forum at UNBC on Thursday. - Brent Braaten, Photographer

Conservative MP Bob Zimmer stuck with the party's position, but stayed away from the controversial comments he made earlier this week when the issue of whether there should be an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal woman was raised during an all candidates meeting at the University of Northern British Columbia on Thursday.

On Tuesday during a similar event in Fort St. John for candidates running in Prince George-Peace River-Northern Rockies, Zimmer said "a lack of a job" is one of the reasons behind the disappearance and killings of 1,181 women between 1980 and 2012 in Canada.

By Thursday, Zimmer appeared aware of the fallout he created.

"My point was that I was making a statement based on an RCMP study that had already been done in regards to aboriginal women and one of the risk factors in there was what I spoke about," Zimmer said.

Zimmer went on to repeat the party line that the issue has been thoroughly studied and "it's time for action."

In Fort St. John, Zimmer had asked NDP candidate Kathi Dickie if she had read the RCMP study that found most of the perpetrators were men the victims knew and that the solve rate for such cases was the same as that for the total population.

Dickie, a Fort Nelson First Nation councillor and former chief replied that she didn't, retorting that she didn't need to read it "because obviously it has not worked - there are still women missing and being murdered."

On Thursday, Dickie said she has since read the RCMP report and noted a lack of aboriginal input.

"I believe that you see it as a tragedy and I believe that you do care and you want it solved," Dickie told Zimmer. "But... why am I seen as a inferior disposable object and have been for years?"

Dickie's comment drew applause from many who packed the Canfor auditorium.

Liberal candidate Matt Shaw, whose party supports an inquiry, said "symbolism is very important in leadership and the fact is this is a national emergency and the perception is out there that if this were any other demographic, white women around the Greater Toronto Area, [there would have been a inquiry]."

Green candidate Elizabeth Biggar said there needs to be more acknowledgment of the cultural genocide aboriginal people have gone through.

She also said a woman in Canada typically earns 71 cents for every dollar a man does and the figure for an aboriginal woman falls to 46 cents.

Barry Blackman of the Progressive Canadian party suggested an army of private investigators be hired to augment the RCMP's work on the cases not yet solved.

Health care emerged as a hot button issue drawing responses from the crowd as Zimmer and Dickie in particular got into a back and forth.

Zimmer said federal transfers to the provinces for health care has increased from \$26 billion to \$40 billion next year under the Conservatives and will continue to rise by six per cent per year ongoing.

"So where are the doctors?" Dickie replied.

Zimmer said the province's job to administer health care.

"The money is there," he said, drawing a mixed response from onlookers.

Asked about ways to diversify northern B.C.'s economy, Zimmer said it is trade agreements will help soften the edges of the business cycle while Dickie emphasized education.

Shaw said the government's role is to put the incentives in place to make the area attractive to investors.

Blackman said governments need to budget on a seven-year basis, running deficits during tough times and surpluses during the good ones to balance the budget out over that time.

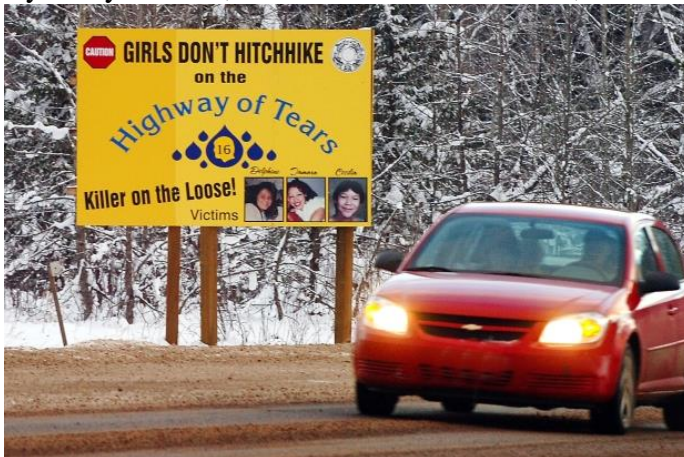
Biggar stressed wind and geothermal power and dismissed liquified natural gas and oil as putting all the eggs into one basket.

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/plight-of-aboriginal-women-sparks-heated-debate-1.2081473#sthash.4Vnk0LwS.dpuf>

B.C. Conservative candidate slammed for comments on missing aboriginal women

Bob Zimmer, incumbent MP for Prince George-Peace River-Northern Rockies, suggested one of the main drivers for Canada's missing and murdered aboriginal women was the fact they didn't stay on the reserves

By Kelly Sinoski, Vancouver Sun October 9, 2015



File photo from 2007 of a billboard warning girls not to hitchhike on the Highway of Tears.

A Conservative candidate in Northern B.C. drew boos at an all-candidates' debate in Fort St. John recently when he suggested one of the main drivers for Canada's missing and murdered aboriginal women was the fact they didn't stay on the reserves.

Bob Zimmer, incumbent MP for Prince George-Peace River-Northern Rockies, was responding to a question about whether he would support an inquiry into missing and murdered women.

“If I thought an inquiry would save one life, I would do it,” he said. But he noted there have been several reports, including one by the RCMP, suggesting a major driver for the missing women is the lack of economic activity, “or simply put, the lack of a job,” on reserves.

“Ultimately when people have a job they’re not in despair and they can stay on reserve ... and that’s where we want them to be,” Zimmer said, according to an audio recording of the event. “A lot of them don’t want to move off reserve, they want to stay there.”

NDP candidate Kathi Dickie, a former chief and councillor with the Fort Nelson First Nations, said she was “flabbergasted” by Zimmer’s comments.

“We had almost 1,200 women murdered because they didn’t have a job, and they wouldn’t stay on the reserve?” Dickie asked. “They are still being murdered. We need an inquiry to get to the root cause of this. It’s a shame on Canada’s reputation.”

The NDP has said, if elected, it would call an inquiry within 100 days.

Zimmer argued the Conservatives don’t believe they need another study, saying they are prepared to act, and asked if Dickie had read the “very comprehensive” RCMP report. She countered she didn’t need to because “I’ve lived the life of an aboriginal woman.”

However, Dickie told The Vancouver Sun later that she had read the RCMP study twice and was concerned by its methodology because it only includes statistical analysis and no input from aboriginals.

She noted there are at least four unsolved murders in her community, and Zimmer’s comments are hurtful to those families whose loved ones are missing or dead.

“It just shows he’s basing his opinion on the Harper government and what it’s telling him to say,” Dickie said in a phone interview with The Vancouver Sun. “They have no sense of how complex this issue is. It’s almost like (he’s saying) it’s their fault they got murdered. If only they got a job, if only they stayed on the reserve ...”

Zimmer did not return a request for an interview with The Vancouver Sun Friday.

Connie Greyeyes, who works with Fort St. John Sisters in Spirit, said she was “deeply saddened” by Zimmer’s comments, noting many of the missing and murdered women were her friends or family. Several victims’ families also contacted her, she said, and were upset.

“In this day and age, for those kinds of comments to come out, especially for missing or murdered women or girls, is unacceptable,” Greyeyes said. “It really pushed a lot of buttons, really hurt a lot of people.”

“I don’t think you can backtrack from that. This is exactly why families are calling for an inquiry — this kind of mindset is right across Canada.”

Greyeyes, who is working with Elections Canada to bump up voters’ lists, said the debate has brought the issue into the fore, prompting many people to have a change of heart going into this election. The large, rural riding has long been a Conservative stronghold.

“It’s really ignited the First Nations people in this area to get out and vote,” Greyeyes said. “He opened up a huge conversation that probably should have happened.”

Read more:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/conservative+candidate+slammed+comments+missing+aboriginal+women/11428401/story.html#ixzz3oZ8kOjOX>

Quebec Conservative candidate backtracks on inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women

During debate, candidate for Manicouagan said 'he believed' Conservatives would hold public inquiry

By Steve Rukavina, [CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 14, 2015 7:24 AM ET Last Updated: Oct 14, 2015 12:40 PM ET



Conservative party candidate for Manicouagan Yvon Boudreau with leader Stephen Harper. (Facebook)

A Conservative candidate in Quebec has clarified his position after seeming to contradict leader Stephen Harper in suggesting the party would launch an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal if re-elected.

'I believe, upon our return to power, there is going to be a commission of inquiry that is going to happen.' - *Conservative candidate Yvon Boudreau*

Yvon Boudreau, running in the riding of Manicouagan, was asked about the idea during a debate in Forestville Tuesday night.

"There is an opening and I believe, upon our return to power, there is going to be a commission of inquiry that is going to happen," Boudreau said.

The comment is at odds with those made by Conservative Leader Stephen Harper.

In a statement released Wednesday, the party said Boudreau misspoke, and that he was actually making reference to RCMP investigations — and not to an official inquiry.

'Not really on our radar'

The Conservative government rejected repeated calls to call a national inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women.

[In an interview with CBC's Peter Mansbridge](#) last December, Harper said the idea was "not really on our radar."

"Our ministers will continue to dialogue with those who are concerned about this," Harper told Mansbridge at the time.

In an interview with Maclean's magazine last month, Harper said the government had already done 40 studies on missing and murdered aboriginal women and that the issue had been "studied to death."

He said that's why his government was putting resources into prevention and investigation and into enforcement.

NDP leader Tom Mulcair and Liberal leader Justin Trudeau have both promised to launch inquiries into missing and murdered aboriginal women if elected.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/conservative-candidate-yvon-boudreau-missing-murdered-1.3269931>

How the Canadian Authorities Have Impeded Reporting on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

October 13, 2015

By [Jane Gerster](#)

This article originally appeared on VICE Canada.

Last month, I was crashing on a friend's couch while driving north through Ontario to research a story about a young mother who had been murdered more than a decade ago. The friend asked why I was passing through and I told him. I was working on the latest in an [ongoing series](#) about missing and murdered Indigenous women. He mentioned seeing an earlier story in the series, "[She was 16 When She Went Missing, But the RCMP Didn't Tell Anyone for Three Years](#)."

"Makes you wonder who's missing now that we don't know about," he said.

His words have stayed with me. As a journalist, I'm not bothered by the things people don't know; I'm galvanized by them. If there's something that people don't know, reporters can ask, and learn, and report. That's our job. What really confounds me are the things that people choose not to know.

How does a journalist make people choose to know? More than 1,200 Indigenous women have gone missing or been murdered in Canada in just three decades. How do you both attract and inform readers who believe that this statistic is a "native problem," when in fact it is a symptom of colonialism—which has Canadians valuing Indigenous artifacts and sacred objects ([think white kids wearing headdresses](#)), but not Indigenous people or their way of life?

Back in January, when I began researching this series, my friend Adam Dietrich was reporting for a small weekly paper in northern Alberta. He began to flip me copies of RCMP press releases about missing Indigenous persons in the region. On average, he says he received one a week.

Adam had become frustrated by what he perceived to be racial bias in the media coverage of the region's missing. He felt certain that the disappearance of a white person would be front-page news for the local weekly, while that of an Indigenous person would be relegated to the back pages, and might not even merit a photo.

His beliefs were not without evidence. The summer before, Adam had written a story about [a 26-year-old Cree woman named Malena Loonskin](#) who'd gone missing and then been found murdered. Malena's common-law husband was charged with the crime (the charges have since been stayed). Due to editorial constraints, his piece was essentially a rewrite of the RCMP's press release on the subject, and his primary source was the officer who wrote it. Adam told me it was the biggest news story that week, yet it ran on page ten. There was no photo of Malena.

More than a year later, Malena's murder still nags at Adam, and there's one aspect of the story that particularly nags at me. Malena's family says that 72 hours passed before police came to help them search for their loved one. Did that affect the quality of evidence

gathered? Does that explain why the charges were stayed? Malena's family wonders, and so do I.

If there's a single thread that binds the stories in my series together, it's the attitude of the police and the judiciary toward Canada's Indigenous people. Occasionally, I'm able to report Indigenous amazement and gratitude for an investigation managed sensitively and competently, but usually, my stories report the pain and frustration caused by racist remarks, offensive assumptions, and legal standards that seem arbitrary at best, unjust at worst.

I've met people who say: Not all cops. Not all men. People who blame the Indigenous woman who was being beaten by her husband, because she went back to him before he ultimately killed her. People who, when confronted with the story of the RCMP officer who brought an Indigenous woman home from jail to "[pursue a personal relationship](#)," mention the video of the [officer dancing at a powwow](#). People who say: They balance out somehow, right?

A few weeks ago, I visited with a mother whose daughter was murdered, whose case was botched repeatedly. She was furious, her eyes wet with tears, but she told me vehemently that before her daughter's case she believed in the police, she trusted them. Experience has destroyed that trust.

When I think about the RCMP, inevitably I think about [Krystle Knott](#), born 26 years ago.

If Krystle had enjoyed the opportunity to translate her childhood ambitions into adult passions, she might now be a veterinarian or a mechanic. She might still listen to Shania Twain. (She'd probably be as stubborn and willful as ever.) But her family will never know. Krystle was killed, together with 19-year-old Rene Gunning; the girls' remains were found in 2011. Who killed the two young women? That's just one more thing Krystle's family would like to know.

My first call to the police about Krystle was to an RCMP spokeswoman in Edmonton. I wanted to know why Krystle had been missing for three years before the RCMP said a single public word about her. I also wanted to explore the perception that her aunt, Doris Goulet, has of the case (which, to this day, remains unsolved): "It's like: they're found, they're buried, so it's done."

I asked the spokeswoman: Could you talk about that? Could you tell me about the procedures for staying in touch with families when cases drag on for years? Could you tell me how the RCMP tries to assure victims' families that it's still investigating?

For the second time in two months (the month before, I'd called about Malena's story), the spokeswoman was incredulous that it was a journalist calling, rather than the family itself. If the family has a problem with the investigation, she suggested, the family should call.

Krystle's cousin, Wendy Goulet, knows why the family might not call.

If Wendy could rewind the clock, she would plaster Edmonton and northern Alberta with photos of her young, missing cousin, and she wouldn't wait to do it. She would go with her aunt Doris to the police station. Together, they would demand that Krystle's face be broadcast on the news, without delay.

If Wendy could rewind the clock, would it save Krystle and Rene? She doesn't know. She'll never know. What she does know is the feeling of three years of public silence in a missing-persons case. And she knows what it feels like to read a RCMP release that suggests a loved one's disappearance, while inexplicably failing to identify that person as anything more than "another female":

[Rene] is believed to have left back to the Fort St. John area in the company of another female from Dawson Creek. The pair were thought to be hitchhiking for transportation.

When the police don't tell people someone's missing, Wendy told me later, "it changes your way of thinking. You know she's missing. [...] You can't do anything about it."

At this point, you may object: Not all police or Well, that's just one person's story. If so, I urge you to read the detailed and horrific [report by Human Rights Watch](#): "Canada: Abusive Policing, Neglect Along 'Highway of Tears.'"

On the phone with the RCMP spokeswoman, I forged ahead with my questions about Krystle. Most of them she couldn't, or wouldn't, answer.

"I wouldn't be able to speak to an ongoing investigation in specific details," she said at first.

Later she told me, "I don't have that information and we wouldn't be, I wouldn't be, providing that information."

It took a call to the Edmonton Police, another to the British Columbia RCMP, and another to the national RCMP before I got someone on the phone who would say more than Sorry, no. But even these answers—from a different spokeswoman with the Alberta RCMP, one who had been directed to return my call by the force's national officers—were vague. My attempts to gain answers through the

Access to Information system have been shut down lest the public knowing why Krystle's disappearance wasn't publicized interfere with the hunt for her killer.

Sadly, the RCMP's insistence on secrecy is not limited to Krystle's case. I've spent much of the past nine months posing variations of these questions in respect of several different Indigenous women who disappeared or were murdered. These women died or disappeared in different ways, in different places—but the police response is always

fundamentally the same: the investigation is ongoing, and we need privacy in order to bring it to a successful resolution.

But only one case, that of [Denise Bourdeau](#), abused and then killed by her common-law spouse, has been brought to a successful resolution. And having spent so much time in the homes of families desperate for any scrap of information—no matter how grim—about the fate of their loved ones, I have to believe that there must be a better way. The police must find a way to protect the integrity of its investigations, while at the same time ensuring that families awaiting news do not wind up feeling abandoned by the very system designed to protect and serve them.

Direct Link: <http://www.vice.com/read/how-the-ramp-has-impeded-reporting-on-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women>

Thank you, Stephen Harper. Sincerely, Indigenous women

By [Elizabeth McSheffrey](#) in [News](#), [Politics](#) | October 15th 2015

#157 of 165 articles from the Special Report: [Canada's 2015 Federal Election Campaign](#)



Indigenous women play a song at a National Energy Board public hearing for Enbridge's Line 9 oil pipeline in October 2013. Photo by Canadian Press.

Indigenous women have a message for Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Under his watch, [nearly 300](#) of their own have been found missing, murdered or dead under suspicious circumstances, but a national inquiry [“isn’t really high”](#) on the PM's radar. Their children make up [nearly half](#) of the country's foster care population, and [one in four](#) Indigenous children currently lives in poverty.

Under his watch, [more than 90](#) First Nations communities lack access to safe drinking water, and [over \\$60 million](#) has been slashed from Indigenous organizational budgets.

Yet today, days before the [federal election](#), Indigenous women say they would like to thank him.

Thank you, Stephen Harper

“All of the bad stuff he has been doing has translated into this beautiful response from Indigenous people that ends up being led by Indigenous women,” said Tanya Kappo, an Edmonton lawyer from the Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation and First Nations activist.

“I would thank him because he forced us as Indigenous women to take our place instead of waiting for the place to be made for us.”



First Nations activist Tanya Kappo. Photo by Angela Gzowski.

Since 2006, Harper has issued a national apology for Indian Residential Schools — but has also [denied Canada's history of colonization](#). His Conservative government also trashed the Kelowna Accord and passed sweeping omnibus bills that compromised Canada's natural resources, and the ability of Indigenous people to protect them.

This steady stream of insults, along with [disregard](#) for nearly 1,200 missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW), has spawned an unprecedented level of First Nations activism that has captured national and international attention, she suggested.

Think [#IdleNoMore](#), [#MMIW](#), [#AmINext](#), [#MyReconciliation](#), and [#HoldTheRations](#), just to name a few.

A cause to unite the country

The last several years under the Harper government have, in fact, profoundly changed the non-Indigenous perspective of issues like First Nations land rights and environmental conservation, Kappo said.

“This has had a really big impact on how the relationship has changed with non-Indigenous Canadians,” said Kappo. “Suddenly, they’re seeing us differently than the sort of angry Indian that’s been portrayed for generations.”

First Nations relationships with the federal government may have deteriorated over the last 10 years, but in many ways, their bond with the rest of Canada has never been stronger, she explained.

Protests against Bill C-51, the [Pull Together](#) campaign against the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline, and the [Unist'ot'en Camp](#) in northwestern B.C. are just a few First Nations-led movements that have garnered support from thousands of Canadians country-wide.

Nova Scotia Native Women's Association president Cheryl Maloney believes First Nations communities have "a lot of power" in Canada as a result of this activism, inspired by pushback against Harper.

"When I was at some rallies, non-Aboriginal Canadians were outnumbering us," she told *National Observer*. "Canadians were paying attention to the omnibus legislation, and they know because of the advocacy of First Nations that the environment is at risk in this country.

"We may be living in some of the poorest places and with some of the worst statistics, but over the last four years, aboriginal and environmental issues — we've influenced the Canadian psyche on that."



Cheryl Maloney, president of the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association. Twitter photo.

Despite feeling "more racism from our prime minister" than the rest of Canadian society combined, Maloney said she would like to thank Harper not only for bringing Canadians together, but for "awakening" Indigenous youth as well.

According to the Mi'kmaq advocate, the 2012 Idle No More movement gave birth to a more informed generation of young people who understand everything from omnibus bills to treaty laws and the legislative process in Canada.

A rediscovered identity

"Our youth were at every round dance, every protest," she explained. "Our ceremonies came back through the kids, who did everything in ceremony whether they were taught it or not. It's so powerful."

Métis and Cold Lake First Nation artist Dawn Marie Marchand has reclaimed her own Indigenous identity over the last decade, and now uses art and culture to engage First Nations youth in Alberta.

Before the Harper government, she said it was easier to "gloss over" the concerns of Indigenous communities, but now that these issues have been pushed into the spotlight, it won't be so easy to do so in the future.

"There have been so many opportunities to call out the systematic racism inherent in the Indian Act through social media," she said in an interview.

"If he wasn't so blatant in his dog-whistle politics and demonizing women and Indigenous issues, many of us never would have found our voice."



Alberta artist, author and youth engagement worker Dawn Marie Marchand. Photo provided by Dawn Marie Marchand.

But don't be confused, she added — Indigenous women aren't *happy* with Stephen Harper. On the contrary, Marchand fears that if Harper is re-elected, her people will experience worse challenges under his administration.

Systematic marginalization

"It's almost like you're in battle, but it's not a physical battle," she told *National Observer*. "You know without a doubt that you are not valued in this country."

Marchand said Harper appears to have a systematic policy of marginalization that not only affects Indigenous people, but ethnic minorities at large.

"Now we're seeing the next step, which is the demonization of Muslim people," she explained. "[The Conservative government] is not above any form of divide and conquer. Their priority is to access land and resources by any means necessary."

Kappo whole-heartedly agreed, and said dismissal of MMIW is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to systematic marginalization under the Harper government.

With the Tories at the helm, she believes First Nations "consultation" has frequently been little more than tokenism.

"We heard Harper saying this a lot during the Jan. 11 [2013] talk, '[We're willing to work with any First Nations who are willing to work with us](#),'" she explained. "But that's not true either, they're willing to work with First Nations who are willing to take what they're offering, which is nothing."

So what's the message from these Indigenous women?

Thank you, Stephen Harper — and don't come back

Kappo, Marchand and Maloney share the view that it's time for the veteran prime minister to go.

He's already done enough damage to his own party's reputation, let alone the reputation of the federal government.

"I think Stephen Harper and the Conservatives for all Canadians have been the worst offender ignoring the foundation of Canada, which is the Constitution," said Maloney. "That's bigger than just saying they're ignoring aboriginal rights."

Both the Liberals and NDP have made large election promises to Indigenous Canadians, including an [end to boil-water advisories](#) across all reserves, [a national MMIW inquiry](#), and billions of dollars in infrastructure, health, and education investments.

Repair work will have to start right away if the government aspires to have a real relationship with First Nations communities, said Marchand, and those initiatives must involve Indigenous scholars, philosophers, and law-makers.

"If you look within the Harper Conservatives, that has changed forever the political landscape for Canadians," she explained. "It has infiltrated every board, every area of federal reach within the country. I don't think anything is going to turn on a dime."

The Conservative Party National Campaign did not answer multiple calls for comment on this story.



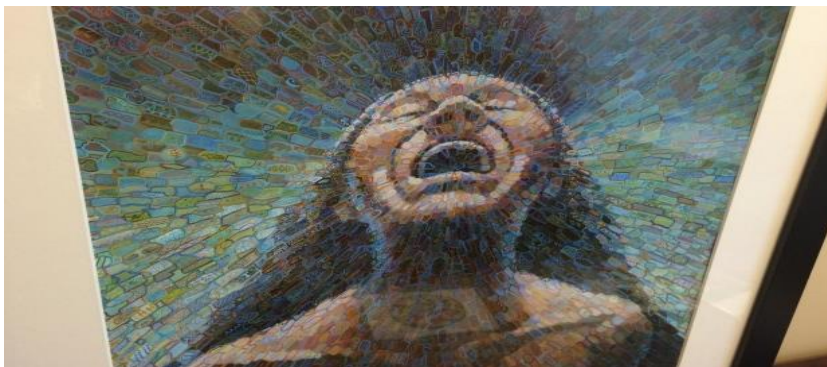
Hundreds of people march through Vancouver, B.C. during the 25th annual Women's Memorial March.
Photo by Canadian Press.

Direct Link: <http://www.nationalobserver.com/2015/10/15/news/thank-you-stephen-harper-sincerely-indigenous-women>

Missing, murdered indigenous women an election issue for all Canadians, advocates say

Deaths, disappearances of First Nations, Métis and Inuit women and girls a 'fundamental human rights issue'

By Nicole Ireland, [CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 15, 2015 4:21 PM ET Last Updated: Oct 15, 2015 6:39 PM ET



Artist Dave Fadden donated a print of his painting *Scream of the Silenced* to the Akwesasne First Nation to raise money in support of the upcoming *Walking With Our Sisters* travelling art exhibit. The painting is a mosaic of tiny intricate designs, representing the more than 1,000 missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada. (Nicole Ireland/CBC)

The need for a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women is not just an aboriginal issue and should be on all Canadians' minds when they cast their ballots on Monday, the Native Women's Association of Canada says.

"So long as there is any group of people in Canada who are not safe, we really cannot all consider ourselves safe," said the association's president Dawn Harvard in an interview with CBC News. "We need to make sure we are protecting and doing right by the most vulnerable members of our population."



Dawn Harvard, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, says missing and murdered indigenous women should be a 'mainstream' election issue. (Nicole Ireland/CBC)

Calls for an inquiry have intensified since the release of several reports over the last year, including a 2014 RCMP report that found aboriginal women are "over-represented among Canada's murdered and missing women."

[The report found nearly 1,200 documented cases](#) of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls between 1980 and 2012, a number the RCMP said "exceeds previous public estimates." A 2015 United Nations report found that young First Nations, Métis and Inuit women were five times more likely to die under violent circumstances than their non-aboriginal counterparts.

"This is a fundamental human rights issue," said Harvard. "How can you look at Canada as a positive human rights defender around the world if we are violating the human rights of our people right here?"

The Liberal Party, the NDP and the Green Party have pledged to call a national inquiry if elected. The Conservative Party has maintained its pre-election campaign position that an inquiry isn't necessary, saying there have already been many reports on the issue and that

it is taking action instead, citing stronger law enforcement and family-violence prevention initiatives as examples.

But in 2014, the [UN special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples](#) called on the Canadian government to "undertake a comprehensive, nationwide inquiry ... organized in consultation with Indigenous Peoples."

"Bearing in mind the important steps already taken to inquire into the disturbing phenomenon of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls and to develop measures to address this problem, the federal government should undertake a comprehensive, nationwide inquiry into the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls, organized in consultation with indigenous peoples."

– UN report: The Situation of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, May 2014

During the election campaign, the Native Women's Association of Canada has spoken to young people, unions, church groups and "anybody who would listen" about the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women, Harvard said, and has received "overwhelming support" for an inquiry.

"So many people are shocked when they realize that this thing is happening right in our own backyards," she said. "Once people know what's happening, they want to do the right thing. They're appalled and they want to put an end to this."

"It's not that people are unfeeling. It's just that up until this point, [the issue] has been so effectively hidden, so effectively swept under the rug that the average Canadian ... [is] pointed to look at oppression of women in other countries so that they're not looking at what's going on right here in Canada."

'Politicians need to care'

Tanya Lalonde from Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement in Alberta also believes that non-native Canadians care about missing and murdered aboriginal women, once they become aware of the issue.



Tanya Lalonde, president of the Liberal Party's Aboriginal People's Commission in Quebec, says she finds it 'heartening' that people are talking about the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women during this election campaign. (Nicole Ireland/CBC)

Now living in Montreal, the McGill University social work graduate decided to become politically active to make sure indigenous voices are heard in government and chose to work with the Liberal Party as an aboriginal advocate.

This election is different than any other, Lalonde said, because the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women has actually been talked about on the campaign trail.

"What's been really heartening for me as an indigenous young person [is] watching these issues coming to the forefront and just realizing that there are people standing with us and standing up for us," she said.

"I think when your issues are not heard, then you feel like you don't matter and you feel invisible."

At Akwesasne First Nation near Cornwall, Ont., Sarah Rourke has been thinking a lot about missing and murdered indigenous women as she helps co-ordinate the visit of the travelling art exhibit *Walking With Our Sisters* in November. The exhibit features more than 1,700 hand-beaded tops of moccasins, representing the unfinished journeys of aboriginal women and girls who have disappeared or been murdered.



Sarah Rourke, director of the Native North American Travelling College at Akwesasne First Nation, is helping to prepare for the November arrival of the Walking With Our Sisters travelling art exhibit. (Nicole Ireland/CBC)

Part of the preparation, Rourke said, is to ensure support is available for Akwesasne residents attending the deeply emotional event.

"When I have a daughter, I am going to be worried if she leaves my home and goes to visit somewhere. It is a real reality that she may be murdered or missing," Rourke said. "That's a fear for me, it's a fear for my family, it's a fear for community members."

Unlike Lalonde, Rourke is not involved in non-native politics. But the federal parties' positions on an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and whether those positions influence Canadian voters, matter to her.

"It makes a difference in my heart that they should care enough to ask where our women are," Rourke said. "Anybody should be concerned. Non-native Canadians, native Canadians ... politicians need to care about all Canadians."

"These [indigenous women and girls] are people," she added. "Please humanize this. Please make this something that matters to you."

'Judicial power' of inquiry needed

A formal inquiry is essential, Harvard said, because of the "judicial power" it holds to uncover facts through subpoenas.

That legal weight, she said, "forced" police officers to reveal information that would otherwise have been considered confidential in the 2012 British Columbia inquiry into women murdered by serial killer Robert Pickton. That inquiry found that investigators had failed the victims, who were disproportionately aboriginal.

A national inquiry is also necessary, Harvard said, to educate Canadians about the scope of the problem.

"You need the inquiry to really expose the truth, and that's how we're going to have long-term effective change," she said.

But immediate steps are also needed, Harvard said, to prevent more women and girls from being killed or disappearing. She called the Conservative Party's argument that it is taking action instead of holding an inquiry a "false paradox."

"When you go in to see a doctor, never would you be positioned to have the doctor say, 'Well you can have a diagnostic test or you can have treatment but you can't have both,'" Harvard said. "It can't be an either-or and it needs to go together so that whatever outcome we have, whatever national action plan, is well-informed and effective and addressing the real causes."

Harvard said she hopes Canadians will talk to their political candidates about missing and murdered aboriginal women.

"It's really important to make this a mainstream issue," she said. "This is not a feminist issue, this is not even an aboriginal issue. This needs to be a Canadian issue."



Sarah Rourke learned to bead so she could contribute to Akwesasne First Nation's collaborative art project to honour missing and murdered indigenous women, which will be displayed when the Walking With Our Sisters travelling exhibit arrives in the community in November. (Nicole Ireland/CBC)

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/missing-murdered-indigenous-women-election-1.3259466>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

California Native American Day Celebrates Cultural Pride and Tribal Partnerships

[Valerie Taliman](#)

10/9/15

It was a day of cultural pride, stirring speeches and partnerships for positive social change.

The 48th celebration of California Native American Day brought nearly 70 tribal leaders and hundreds of participants to the capitol in Sacramento on September 25. The event showcased cultural traditions and highlighted challenges tribes are facing, including water rights protection, veterans' needs and efforts to ban racist mascots in schools.

Tribal delegations came from throughout California, bringing elders, students, veterans, youth, elected officials and dance groups who shared traditional songs and dances from the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok, Karuk Youth Dancers, K'iwinia'n-ya:n Singers and the Kashia Pomo Dancers.

The day's ceremonies began with an opening blessing and posting of flags by the Tule River Veterans Color Guard. The Blood River drum group sang a warrior's song as a procession of Native leaders carried tribal flags that were prominently displayed across the steps of the capitol.

San Manuel Chairwoman Lynn Valbuena and Tuolumne Me-wuk Tribal Council Member Dennis Hendricks, masters of ceremonies, welcomed the crowd and spoke about the importance of California Native American Day to recognize the history and cultures of more than 109 tribal nations who collectively wield considerable business, political and economic weight.

With tribal communities plagued by drought, wildfires and floods, this year's theme was "Water: Protecting Our Natural Resources." At least nine tribes have declared water emergencies in recent months and several reservations were scorched by raging wildfires that burned 813,163 acres in the state this fire season.

Gov. Brown's proclamation said, "... contact between the first (Native) Californians and successive waves of newcomers over the three succeeding centuries was marked by the utter devastation of Native American people, families and society. The colonial regimes of Spain and Mexico, through disease and slavery, reduced the indigenous population by

more than half. Then the Gold Rush came, and with it a wave of new diseases and outright violence that halved the population again in just two years.”

“The newborn State of California institutionalized violence against Native Americans, enacting policies of warfare, slavery and relocation that left few people alive and no tribe intact,” the proclamation states. “In his 1851 address to the Legislature, our first Governor, Peter Hardeman Burnett, famously stated ‘That a war of extermination will continue to be waged between the two races until the Indian race becomes extinct, must be expected.’ ”

“In spite of Burnett’s prediction, California today is home to the largest population of Native Americans in the 50 states, including both the rebounding numbers of our native Tribes and others drawn to the Golden State by its myriad attractions,” the statement said. “The success of tribal businesses and the rise of tribal members in all walks of life today stand as testament to the resilience and enduring spirit of our Native peoples. If Governor Burnett could not envision a future California including Native Americans, it is just as impossible for us today to envision one without them.”

In a special tribute to Native American veterans, Rincon Chairman Bo Mazzetti, a Navy veteran, and California Veterans Affairs Secretary Todd Irby called up all veterans in attendance and asked everyone in the audience to shake hands and thank all the veterans for their service.



Rincon Tribal Chairman Bo Mazzetti and California Veterans Secretary Todd Irby were among hundreds who shook hands and thanked all the veterans in attendance during a special tribute to veterans at California Native American Day. (Photo: Paula Shultz)

“It was my honor to have designed a feather flag lapel pin with the Indian on top of pin and veteran on the bottom,” said Mazzetti. “This was the first time we honored our Indian veterans on California Native American Day. As a veteran, I was proud to see the great appreciation of all the people in attendance for our Indian veterans there. We have for too long forgotten to show our own veterans that we as Indian people remember and appreciate them.”

Three legislative sponsors of Native American Day, Sen. Isadore Hall III, Sen. Mike McGuire, and Assembly Member Luis A. Alejo, spoke about their efforts to fairly represent concerns of tribes in their districts.

Alejo drew cheers from the crowd when he discussed Assembly Bill 30, legislation he sponsored to help ban racist mascot names in California, including the term “redskins.” Alejo called 16-year-old Dahkota Brown to the podium and told the crowd that the Miwuk youth from Jackson Rancheria had inspired him last year by asking him to sign a petition banning racist mascots.

“This year I’m proud to have authored AB 30, a measure that would once and for all phase out the use of the R-word as a mascot in California public schools. Under current law, all persons in public schools are to have equal rights and opportunities in every educational institution of the state,” Alejo said. “But allowing a public school to use the derogatory term which was used to describe Native American scalps sold for bounty goes against this policy. This bill will gradually phase-out the term R-word as a school or athletic team mascot or nickname starting January 1, 2017.”

Though legislation banning mascots previously had been proposed in the legislature, this year Alejo was successful in getting the Assembly and Senate to approve AB 30. The legislation is awaiting Brown’s signature; he has until October 11 to sign the bill.

“I met Assembly Member Alejo in the capitol last year when I was asking for signatures on a petition banning racist mascots,” said Dahkota. “That moment was a huge turning point in my life because he introduced me to the legislative process and taught me how to work within government. I can’t thank him enough for sponsoring AB 30 with bipartisan support. We’re keeping our fingers crossed that Governor Brown will sign off on this historic bill so that California can lead the nation as an example to change these racist mascot names.”

Dahkota thanked all the elders, activists and leaders before him who worked for more than 60 years to fight the use of demeaning mascots and pledged to keep the movement going.

“We’re all a part of this fight and we’ll continue until we win,” he said. “It’s a matter of time.”

The 2015 Native American Day was organized and hosted by the California State Tribal Liaisons and the Southern, Northern and Central California Tribal Chairmen’s Associations.

Valerie Taliman is Indian Country Today Media Network's West Coast Editor.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/10/09/california-native-american-day-celebrates-cultural-pride-and-tribal-partnerships-162031>

Why I Left The Native American Reservation Where I Grew Up

Oct 9, 2015 11:30 AM

[Wendy Rose Gould](#)

In our series [A Class Of Their Own](#), Refinery29 is following five college freshmen from across the country as they define their identities and relationships.

Ask most college freshmen what they miss now that they've left the nest, and you expect to hear answers such as high school buddies, former sports teams and clubs, childhood pets, and home-cooked meals. But Denesha Rodriguez? She misses the land.

The 20-year-old mother of a baby boy is a new student at Glendale Community College — a 20,000-student campus just outside of Phoenix. She's already what most would consider a "non-traditional" freshman, but when you add in the fact that Rodriguez grew up on a Native American reservation (the San Carlos Apache Nation, established in 1871), you take the term "non-traditional" to another level. And the reservation is still on Rodriguez's mind as she rushes around the bustling campus and city, from classes to her one-year-old son's day care.

For starters, Rodriguez misses the culture (the food, the rituals, the music), and being able to fish or hunt or hike on the 1.8 million acres of land she grew up on. She laments the tedious process of acquiring permits that non-natives must go through just to be able to wander in the woods. "When I wanted to go to the mountains, I would go. When I wanted to go to the lakes and the rivers, I would go," she told me. "I didn't have to think about all the expenses and protocol you go through here. The land was just free, and I would just go."

When I wanted to go to the mountains, I would go. When I wanted to go to the lakes and the rivers, I would go.

That said, despite the beauty of the reservation and its proximity to Rodriguez's friends and family, she made a conscious decision to extricate herself from San Carlos Apache as soon as she was able. "I moved off the reservation at 18, just after finishing high school," she says. "Even though it was beautiful, I wanted to get away from it — because of all the violence, alcohol, and drugs." Like a number of Native American reservations, San Carlos Apache Nation has seen its share of crime. It's also been struck with [devastating unemployment levels and poverty](#), which only further fuel drug culture and violence. Things are getting better on the reservation, though, Rodriguez says, and she intends to be a part of that upward trend. In fact, she's specifically working toward a Bachelor's degree in criminal justice and plans to go into law enforcement upon graduation. Her ultimate goal is to move back to San Carlos Apache, degree in hand, to assist with crime reduction and improve the quality of life for the people there. She's even begun the

process of planning out the future of her plot of land (these plots are awarded to all residents of the Nation).

Like any college student, though, Rodriquez isn't only keeping her nose in the books. In addition to running on the cross-country team, she serves as the vice president of the Native American Student Association at GCC. And then, there's her home life. Her boyfriend, Juan, also lives in Glendale; they met on Facebook and have been dating for three years. Their son was a surprise — one that turned out to be a blessing.

“Doctors told me that I couldn’t have kids,” Rodriquez explained. “I was having unprotected sex for two and a half years with my boyfriend...and then, one day, I conceived.” When that pregnancy test came back positive, Rodriquez was only months away from starting her freshman year. “I was really mad when I realized I was pregnant,” she said. “But I picked myself up and I said, ‘This is for my son and for my future.’” After consideration, Rodriquez made the decision to briefly postpone her academic endeavors while she carried and cared for her baby, with Juan by her side. Then, she re-enrolled at GCC a year later.

The college dating game isn’t something that occupies Rodriquez’s time or energy, because she’s a mother and in a long-term relationship. Sure, she likes to dress stylishly and spends time making sure her hair and makeup are on point, and she notices the muscled men who pass by her on campus. When asked whether she felt like she was missing out on the school's hookup and dating culture, Rodriquez joked about what it might be like to sneak behind a campus building to make out with one of those strapping, book-carrying passers-by.

Fantasies and admirations from afar are just that, though. There's little time for dating when you've got day care pickups, homework, and school activities filling up your calendar. “Since I'm in a long-term relationship, I don't need to worry about drama or having problems [that] could mess with my classes or sports,” Rodriquez explains. And it’s not as if Denesha doesn’t have a social life outside of her boyfriend and son. “We have a good relationship and trust each other. I still hang out with people and make friends, especially guys, because I grew up with six boys as my cousins and am comfortable having guy friends.”

It’s worth noting that Rodriquez and her boyfriend actually live apart, despite sharing a child. This was a deliberate decision Rodriquez made, in an attempt to focus on her schoolwork. Still, she’s adamant about the importance of her son having a relationship with his father, especially since she didn't have a dad growing up. “I am pretty in love,” she says, “but I’m still not ready for marriage and just want to take things slowly.”

In a way, Rodriquez says, having a child and a serious boyfriend has made her somewhat disconnected from her more “traditional freshman” peers — or, at least, perhaps more mature in some regards. In the end, she’s happy she doesn't have to worry about the complexities of Tinder culture or the stress of a new relationship. In fact, the only complaint she expressed was that she and her boyfriend were having, well, too *much* sex.

Still, despite the complications and distractions of juggling a healthy relationship, motherhood, school, and sports, Rodriquez is determined to excel at all of it — and to

someday return to San Carlos Apache Nation with the know-how and power to make a difference for the tribe.

Direct Link: <http://www.refinery29.com/2015/10/94999/native-americans-college-women>

Why These Cities Are Dropping 'Columbus Day' For 'Indigenous People's Day'

by [Carimah Townes](#) Oct 12, 2015 11:04am



Tulalip Tribe member Johnny Moses reacts to Seattle's resolution to recognize Indigenous People's Day last year.

Every year on the second Monday of October, millions of Americans get a day off from work in honor of Christopher Columbus' "discovery" of America in 1492. The day is always a controversial one, as it glorifies a man who launched a large-scale genocide and European colonization.

But instead of celebrating Columbus, [more cities than ever are choosing to commemorate Indigenous People's Day](#) this year. By remembering the history of native peoples, Albuquerque, Portland, St. Paul, and Olympia join at least five other cities shedding light on a population that still feels Columbus' impact, centuries after his arrival.

For years, Native Americans have pressured local governments to acknowledge the mass atrocities committed by Columbus and flip the script by honoring indigenous groups' contributions to the country instead. Efforts of tribal leaders in Olympia last year resulted in the city council formally recognizing Indigenous People's Day. Albuquerque passed a similar resolution in 2014, but it will [observe Columbus Day simultaneously](#). Portland tribes have pushed for a day of recognition since 1954. St. Paul has replaced Columbus Day altogether.

The cities — [joining smaller ones](#) in Oklahoma, Texas, and Michigan — are following in the footsteps of Berkeley and South Dakota, which stopped celebrating Columbus Day in the 1990s. South Dakota has observed Native American Day on the same Monday since 1990. In 1992, Berkeley celebrated the first Indigenous People’s Day on record. Last year, city councils in Seattle and Minneapolis voted to recognize Indigenous People’s Day, and the state of Washington no longer observes Columbus Day at all.

THE MOVEMENT TO ABOLISH COLUMBUS DAY IS PICKING UP STEAM



“Reclaiming the second Monday in October as Indigenous People’s Day makes a powerful statement,” [said](#) Chair Deborah Kafoury of Multnomah County, Oregon. “It says, ‘We are no longer going to celebrate a time of genocide, but instead we will honor the land we live on and the people who have been here since the beginning.’”

Tribal Chairman Reyn Leno of the Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde in Portland [shared](#) the same sentiment. “We’ve been here for hundreds of thousands of years, and we’ve been shy about telling our own story,” he said. “I think that has led the public to have a lot of interest in what we do.”

While the celebration of Indigenous People’s Day marks a significant victory, Native Americans are still [negatively impacted by Columbus’ legacy](#).

Today, 25 percent of Native Americans live in poverty, and economic conditions on reservations are even more dire. Due in large part to slashed federal education funding on reservations, native students have not yet closed the achievement gap the way other people of color have with their white peers. Native Americans have a shorter life expectancy than the rest of the population. They are [disproportionately represented](#) in the criminal justice system. And they are still [treated as mascots and called derogatory names](#) by major public figures.

Direct Link: <http://thinkprogress.org/justice/2015/10/12/3711539/indigenous-peoples-day/>

School board may meet to discuss Bellevue East's ban on Native American props, costumes

Posted: Saturday, October 10, 2015 1:00 am

By Joe DeJka / World-Herald staff writer

Community outcry over the ban on Native American props and costumes at Bellevue East High School might prompt the school board to address the issue next month.

School Board President Nina Wolford said Friday she feels administrators overreacted by [imposing the ban](#) at the school whose mascot is a Chieftain.

Administrators banned tomahawks, headdresses, feathers, spears, “war paint” and use of the term “the Tribe,” which kids had used to describe the student section of the bleachers.

“I see no reason for the ban,” Wolford said.

Wolford graduated from Bellevue East, whose mascot is depicted in the school logo as a Native American man in a feathered headdress.

Social media lit up Friday with a wave of criticism of the ban, which administrators imposed after some students wore headdresses and face paint to the annual rivalry game Sept. 25 against Bellevue West.

Students had posted a big sign by the student section that read: The Home of the Tribe.

Administrators said the items were banned to avoid offending Native Americans.

Wolford said she’s heard from other board members who want to address the ban at the November board meeting.

She said board members learned of the ban after it was enacted.

“We feel this situation would have offered a teachable moment about why, years ago, we chose to name our school mascots after Native Americans as a way to honor a culture that has meant so much to us,” she said.

None of the students who wore the costumes intended disrespect toward Native Americans, she said.

On Sept. 30, administrators informed students of the bans.

The actions, according to the announcement, were in response to “an email received from a concerned citizen.”

Ed Ventura, a teacher at Castelar Elementary School in Omaha Public Schools, saw pictures of the student section online and emailed school officials to complain.

Ventura, who said his tribe is the Prairie Band Potawatomi in Kansas, expressed concern that district officials were allowing students to disrespect Native Americans.

District officials said they got other complaints during and after the game.

Another board member said Friday the board should discuss the ban.

“I, for one, hear what the people are saying, and it’s something we’re definitely going to look into,” said board member Phil Davidson, who was sworn in Monday.

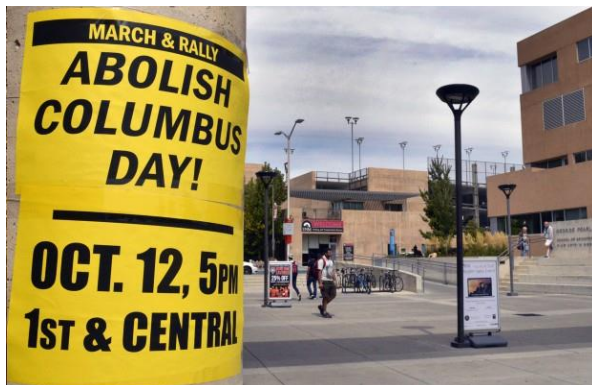
He said it’s important the board has a chance to hear the reasons why policies were changed and to weigh in.

Contact the writer: 402-444-1077, joe.dejka@owh.com

Direct Link: http://www.omaha.com/news/metro/school-board-may-meet-to-discuss-bellevue-east-s-ban/article_76fa6033-6fb8-58d7-9731-2ed3d0830045.html

U.S. reassesses Columbus Day, Native American plight in focus

Last Monday at 4:51 AM in [National](#)



COLUMBUS DAY: In this Sept. 21, 2015, photo, a flyer on the campus of the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque calls for students to join a protest against Columbus Day. Monday, Oct. 12, 2015, marks the annual Columbus Day nationwide, but in a twist that signals a growing trend, it will also be Indigenous Peoples Day in at least nine U.S. cities this year. Photo: Associated Press/Russell Contreras

By Laila Kearney

NEW YORK (Reuters) – About four miles from the world’s largest Christopher Columbus parade in midtown Manhattan on Monday, hundreds of Native Americans and their supporters will hold a sunrise prayer circle to honor ancestors who were slain or driven from their land.

The ceremony will begin the final day of a weekend “powwow” on Randall’s Island in New York’s East River, an event that features traditional dancing, story-telling and art.

The Redhawk Native American Arts Council’s powwow is both a celebration of Native American culture and an unmistakable counterpoint to the parade, which many detractors say honors a man who symbolizes centuries of oppression of aboriginal people by Europeans.

Organizers hope to call attention to issues of social and economic injustice that have dogged Native Americans since Christopher Columbus led his path-finding expedition to the “New World” in 1492.

The powwow has been held for the past 20 years but never on Columbus Day. It is part of a drive by Native Americans and their supporters throughout the country, who are trying to rebrand Columbus Day as a holiday that honors indigenous people, rather than their European conquerors. Their efforts have been successful in several U.S. cities this year.

“The fact that America would honor this man is preposterous,” said Cliff Matias, lead organizer of the powwow and a lifelong Brooklyn resident who claims blood ties with Latin America’s Taino and Kichwa nations. “It makes absolutely no sense whatsoever.”

But for many Italian Americans, who take pride in the explorer’s Italian roots, the holiday is a celebration of their heritage and role in building America. Many of them are among the strongest supporters of keeping the traditional holiday alive.

Berkeley, California, was the first city to drop Columbus Day, replacing it in 1992 with Indigenous Peoples Day. The trend has gradually picked up steam across the country.

Last year, Minneapolis and Seattle became the first major U.S. cities to designate the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples’ Day.

This month, Portland, Oregon, Albuquerque, New Mexico and Bexar County, Texas, decided to eliminate Columbus Day and replace it with the new holiday. Oklahoma City is set for a vote on a similar proposal later this month.

Columbus Day became a U.S. federal holiday in 1937. The federal government and about half of U.S. states give public employees paid leave, according to the Council of State Governments. Schools and government offices are generally closed, but many private businesses remain open.

Support for Indigenous Peoples Day has steadily risen in recent years, paralleling the growing perception that the wave of European settlement in the Western Hemisphere was genocidal to native populations.

Gino Barichello, who attended Berkeley city council meetings in the 1990s that resulted in the establishment of Indigenous Peoples Day, said he viewed the trend with pride.

“To have a recognition and celebration of all the indigenous cultures of the U.S., and Berkeley being one of the catalysts leading that charge, is very exciting,” said Barichello, who says he is half Italian and half Muscogee, a Native American tribe based in Oklahoma.

New York City, with the country’s largest Italian American population at 1.9 million, attracts nearly 35,000 marchers and nearly 1 million spectators to its annual Columbus Day parade.

The Columbus Citizens Foundation, a non-profit that organizes the parade, says on its website the event “celebrates the spirit of exploration and courage that inspired Christopher Columbus’s 1492 expedition and the important contributions Italian-Americans have made to the United States.”

John Viola, president of the Washington, D.C.-based National Italian American Foundation, said renaming Columbus Day dishonors the country’s 25 million Italian Americans and their ancestors. He said Italian Americans feel slighted by cities that are dropping Columbus Day.

“By default, we’re like the collateral damage of this trend,” he said.

The foundation’s leadership council is scheduled later this month to take up the issue.

One of the proposals expected to be floated at the meeting is to change the name to Italian American Day, taking the spotlight off Columbus and other European explorers. Under this proposal, Indigenous People Day would be celebrated on a different day.

“I think many people believe there could be a middle road,” Viola said.

See more at: <http://kgmi.com/news/030030-u-s-reassesses-columbus-day-native-american-plight-in-focus/#sthash.fPmjYGfL.dpuf>

'Maze Runner' cast did not steal Native American items, studio says

LOS ANGELES

Fri Oct 9, 2015 12:36am BST

The cast and crew of "Maze Runner" did not remove artifacts from a New Mexico ranch during filming, 20th Century Fox said on Thursday, after Native American advocates voiced concerns over an actor's light-hearted comment about pilfering historic items.

The film studio said it had conducted an investigation after actor Dylan O'Brien, 24, made offhand comments in an interview that he had fallen ill during filming of "The Scorch Trials," the second film in the "Maze Runner" franchise.

He implied that a Native American curse had taken revenge on cast members who took objects from the grounds of the historical filming location.

"Twentieth Century Fox and the entire Scorch Trials production have deep respect for the local Native American culture and environment and are sorry that any actions or statements by people involved in the production led to any suggestion that our intentions were anything but deferential or that anything was taken from the area," the studio said in a statement.

A publicist for O'Brien did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

O'Brien's remark prompted an online petition, with more than 54,000 people calling for the return of any stolen objects from the ranch where the film was shot last year.

The site in question is the 22,000-acre Diamond Tail Ranch in the high desert between Santa Fe and Albuquerque, New Mexico.

It is not home to any known Indian burial grounds, said property manager Roch Hart, who was unable to detect anything missing from the site's trove of items, including pottery shards and chippings of rock tools. Hart estimated the items dated from 800 A.D. to 1700.

Direct Link: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/10/08/us-film-mazerunner-artifacts-idUKKCN0S238320151008>

Carrboro declares 'Indigenous Peoples' Day'

Aldermen pass resolution declaring second Monday in October Indigenous Peoples' Day

October 10, 2015

The resolution says town has responsibility to oppose racism that contributes to poverty and health disparities among native peoples

Local Occaneechi tribal leader says Columbus Day is 'a sad day' for indigenous peoples

By Mark Schultz

Steve Dear's great grandmother watched Lt. Col. George Custer ride off to the Battle of Little Bighorn.

Custer, of course, never came back. The soldier made his eponymous "last stand" in battle against Northern Plains Indians, part of the Great Sioux War of 1876 against U.S. expansion.

Now Dear, whose ancestor baked desserts for Custer at Fort Abraham Lincoln, wants people to reflect on the rest of the story of those who lived here before "the discovery" of America.

On Tuesday the Carrboro Board of Aldermen, following the lead of cities such as Berkeley, Minneapolis and Seattle and the state of South Dakota, adopted a resolution declaring Monday "Indigenous Peoples' Day in the Town of Carrboro."

"Indigenous Peoples of the lands that would later become known as the Americas have occupied these lands since time immemorial," the resolution states.

"Orange County, North Carolina, is built upon the homelands and villages of the Indigenous Peoples of this region," it continues.

North Carolina has the largest Native American population east of the Mississippi River. There are more than 122,000 American Indians and eight recognized tribes in the state, including the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation in Orange and Alamance counties, according to the N.C. Commission of Indian Affairs.

Alderwoman Michelle Johnson, who read Tuesday's resolution, said she and counterparts in Orange County and Chapel Hill governments had hoped to recognize Indigenous Peoples' Day after Dear brought the idea to them last year, but it didn't happen.

The town's resolution does not replace Columbus Day, she said. "Carrboro doesn't observe it, and our employees don't have it off," she said.

But Johnson said she thought "it was at least important to have the resolution," as she and others consult with local Native Americans and work toward some kind of county-wide observance in the future.

U.N. delegation

Indigenous Peoples' Day was first proposed in 1977 by a delegation to a United Nations conference on discrimination against indigenous populations in the Americas.

In 1994, the U.N. declared each August 9 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. Events celebrate the day around the world, including at U.N. headquarters in New York City.

Carrboro's resolution goes beyond celebrations.

The town has a responsibility, it says, to oppose systemic racism that perpetuates high poverty rates and health and education crises among native peoples.

It calls on the Chapel Hill-Carrboro and Orange County school systems to teach indigenous history and for the community to celebrate Native American culture and values.

John "Blackfeather" Jeffries, a member of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation Tribal Council, already has a Columbus Day tradition.

"I wear a black shirt and a black arm band; that's my protest," Jeffries said Friday. "I say it's a sad day in the history of the native people."

Jeffries says Columbus Day does not celebrate history as much as "his story" and says he appreciates the Carrboro resolution's intentions.

But, "you have to look at this through the eyes of a native person," he said. "We're here every day."

'The real history'

Dear, the executive director of People of Faith Against the Death Penalty, wants this week's resolution to become more than words on paper.

He said he was sitting in his office one day when he read how Minnesota had passed a resolution and thought "gosh, Carrboro could start it in North Carolina."

"Every city and state in America should no longer recognize Columbus Day," Dear said.

"This should be a day of reflection on the real history of our country and mourning what we have done," he said, "and to celebrate the people who were here and whose descendants remain."

Schultz: 919-829-8950

**MOTION WAS MADE BY ALDERMAN JOHNSON, SECONDED BY
ALDERMAN CHANEY TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION BELOW:**

RESOLUTION DECLARING "INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY"

WHEREAS, the holiday known as Columbus Day commemorates the Italian

Explorer Christopher Columbus and his voyages to the "New World"; and,

WHEREAS, Columbus Day has been a federal holiday since 1937; and,

WHEREAS, the Town of Carrboro recognizes that the Indigenous Peoples of the lands that would later become known as the Americas have occupied these lands since time immemorial; and

WHEREAS, the Town recognizes the fact that Orange County, North Carolina is built upon the homelands and villages of the Indigenous Peoples of this region; and

WHEREAS, the Town recognizes and values the many contributions made to our community through Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, labor, technology, science, philosophy, arts and the deep cultural contribution; and

WHEREAS, the Town has a responsibility to oppose the systematic racism towards Indigenous People in the United States, which perpetuates high rates of poverty and income inequality, exacerbating disproportionate health, education, and social crises; and

WHEREAS, the Town promotes the closing of the equity gap for Indigenous Peoples through policies and practices that reflect the experiences of Indigenous Peoples, ensure greater access and opportunity, and honor our nation's indigenous roots, history, and contributions; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous Peoples' Day was first proposed in 1977 by a delegation of Native Nations to the United Nations sponsored International Conference on Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations in the Americas; and

WHEREAS, On February 4, 2002 the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation located in Orange and Alamance counties becomes North Carolina's eighth official Indian tribe; and

WHEREAS, on April 21, 2009 the Town of Carrboro was declared a Human Rights City adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (as the second city in the nation to do so), committing itself to protect, respect and fulfill the full range of inherent human rights for all as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and numerous other international human rights treaties; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN OF CARRBORO THAT:

Section 1. The Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Carrboro declare the second Monday in October as Indigenous Peoples' Day in the Town of Carrboro.

Section 2. The Town of Carrboro strongly supports the proposition that Indigenous Peoples' Day shall be an opportunity to celebrate the thriving cultures and values of the Indigenous Peoples of our region.

Section 3. The Town of Carrboro strongly encourages Chapel Hill-Carrboro and Orange County Public Schools to include the teaching of Indigenous Peoples' history.

Section 4. The Town of Carrboro firmly commits to work with Indigenous communities to promote the well-being and sustenance of Carrboro's Indigenous community.

Section 5. The Town of Carrboro encourages all elected boards in Orange County as well as the Alamance County Board of Commissioners to pass similar resolutions before October of 2016, and asks that the Town Clerk forward this resolution to the clerks of each board.

This the 6th day of October, 2015

Vote:

Ayes: Alderman Seils, Alderman Slade, Alderman Chaney, Mayor Lavelle, Alderman Johnson, Alderman Gist, Alderman Haven-O'Donnell

Nays: None

Read more here: <http://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/community/chapel-hill-news/article38670756.html#storylink=cpy>

Indigenous Peoples Day pays respect to Olympia's tribal past, present and future



Members of the Portland AIM Drum Group open Olympia's first Indigenous Peoples Day celebration Monday at Sylvester Park. Steve Bloom Staff photographer

By Andy Hobbs

Olympia's first Indigenous Peoples Day honored the ancestors who settled this land long before Christopher Columbus arrived in what would be America.

Hundreds of people attended Monday's celebration at Sylvester Park, including representatives from several local tribes. The scent of sage was in the air alongside the sounds of traditional drumming and spiritual songs.

[Olympia is among a handful of U.S. cities](#) to recognize Indigenous Peoples Day on the second Monday in October, a federal holiday that long has honored Columbus.

For many Native Americans, Columbus Day is synonymous with violence, genocide, slavery and brutal exploitation of their people by European conquerors. One poster on Sylvester Park's gazebo summed up that feeling Monday: "Stop insulting the ancestors' souls. Speak the truth. Abolish Columbus Day."

Farron McCloud Sr., chairman of the Nisqually Tribal Council, spoke of the suffering that Native Americans endured as they were forced to assimilate into the white settlers' world while abandoning their ancient culture and traditions.

McCloud also praised the legacies of Chief Leschi and civil rights icon Billy Frank Jr. — two men who fought to protect the rights and land of the Nisqually people and beyond.

"We have our spirituality, our culture and our pride as Native Americans," he told the crowd. "We're not going anywhere. We'll be here forever."

Among those in attendance was state Sen. John McCoy, D-Tulalip and a member of the Tulalip Nation. McCoy successfully pushed for legislation that requires Washington public schools to teach tribal history. Washington and Montana are the only two states with such laws on the books.

"We need to educate people on what we in Indian country would say is the real history — the good, the bad and the ugly," McCoy told The Olympian. "We have to teach the history correctly."

McCoy hopes the Indigenous Peoples Day movement continues to spread across the country, exposing the atrocities associated with the arrival of European settlers in the Americas.

"The old adage says that if you don't teach history, you're doomed to repeat it, so let's not repeat it," McCoy said. "We want to correct the record."

Read more here: <http://www.theolympian.com/news/local/article38884128.html#storylink=cpy>

Bruce Harrell Wants to Proclaim "Italian-American Heritage" Month on Indigenous Peoples' Day

by [Sydney Brownstone](#) • Oct 9, 2015 at 3:57 pm



Last year, Matt Remle (center) lobbied the city council for an Indigenous Peoples' Day celebration. This year, on Indigenous Peoples' Day, Bruce Harrell's office will circulate a draft proclamation declaring Italian-American Heritage and Culture Month. Courtesy of Matt Remle

Well, that was a tense phone call with city council member and District 2 candidate Bruce Harrell.

At 10:50 this morning, Harrell's office notified his council colleagues that he would be introducing a proclamation celebrating Italian-American heritage—and specifically Christopher Columbus—on Monday, which also happens to be Indigenous Peoples' Day. When we called to ask him about it, Harrell said the proclamation's language about Christopher Columbus would be removed.

The [first draft of the proclamation](#) stated:

WHEREAS, Nearly half a millennium ago, when early Italians journeyed to this hemisphere, they helped to begin exchanges between the Old World and the New. Italian navigators Amerigo Vespucci, Giovanni da Verrazano, **and Christopher Columbus**, helped shape our modern world by doing what no others had accomplished;

This section is extremely problematic for a lot of reasons, the chief reason being that "begin exchanges" conveniently leaves out the fact that Columbus **enslaved, brutalized, and murdered** indigenous people on this continent. Recognition of Columbus's true legacy has led Seattle and [a number of other cities](#) to replace the celebration of Christopher Columbus with [Indigenous Peoples' Day](#) instead.

Last year, when Lakota activist and educator Matt Remle led the effort to launch Indigenous Peoples' Day, an angry group of Columbus Day supporters crowded him after a council hearing and compared Sitting Bull to Hitler.

"I have **zero issues with an Italian Heritage Month**, but this move is deeply troubling," Remle said in an e-mailed statement, adding that he supports the removal of Columbus's name. (Later, after *The Stranger* spoke to Harrell, Harrell's office called Remle and assured him the language about Columbus would be taken out.)

When we talked to Harrell, he said that his office had gotten a fair amount of feedback about the proclamation and that **he believed the language about Columbus would be taken out**. When asked how the idea came about in the first place, he said: "We've had Italian Americans approach us a month or two ago to have some kind of—they're having different festivities and they wanted some kind of recognition to present at some of their festivities." Harrell added that he's working with Council Member Nick Licata's office to figure out what would be appropriate.

But couldn't Harrell recognize how the first version of the proclamation could be seen as a pretty outrageous attempt to erase history? Why include Columbus at all? And why—of all days—would you introduce this on Indigenous Peoples' Day?

"I was the drafter of Indigenous Peoples' Day and I do know how offensive these terms could be, and we've listened to people and these changes have been made," Harrell said. Harrell, who was actually just a later cosponsor—not *the* drafter, we're told by someone close to the drafting—of the Indigenous Peoples' Day resolution, added that he thinks it's a good idea when organizations (Italian Americans, East Africans) want to celebrate their heritage, and "the city should get behind that."

Harrell did not like my next question at all. "Well, what if white people wanted to celebrate white heritage on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day?" I asked him.

"I'm not going to respond to a strange hypothetical about white people celebrating white heritage," Harrell replied.

But didn't he see the analogy?

"I don't see any value in responding to that idiotic question," Harrell said.

Harrell's proclamation will be made available for signatures on the same day that city council members vote on a resolution to recognize the [traumatic legacy of American Indian boarding schools](#).

Direct Link: <http://www.thestranger.com/blogs/slog/2015/10/09/22987432/bruce-harrell-wants-to-proclaim-italian-heritage-month-on-indigenous-peoples-day>

More Cities Are Recognizing Native Americans on Columbus Day

By mary hudetz, associated press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Oct 11, 2015, 2:33 PM ET

More cities are recognizing Native Americans on [Columbus Day](#) this year as they revive a movement to change the name of the holiday to celebrate the history and contributions of indigenous cultures around the country.

As the U.S. observes Columbus Day on Monday, it will also be Indigenous Peoples Day in at least nine cities for the first time this year, including Albuquerque; Portland, Oregon; St. Paul, Minnesota; and Olympia, Washington.

Encouraged by city council votes in Minneapolis and Seattle last year, Native American activists made a push in dozens of cities in recent months to get local leaders to officially recognize the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples Day. Their success was mixed.

The campaigns say the federal holiday honoring [Christopher Columbus](#) — and the parades and pageantry accompanying it — overlook a painful history of colonialism, enslavement, discrimination and land grabs that followed the Italian explorer's 1492 arrival in the Americas. The indigenous holiday takes into account the history and contributions of Native Americans for a more accurate historical record, activists have argued.

Columbus Day supporters say the holiday celebrates centuries of cultural exchange between America and Europe, commemorates an iconic explorer and honors Italian-Americans, a group that has endured its own share of discrimination.

"For the Native community here, Indigenous Peoples Day means a lot. We actually have something," said Nick Estes of Albuquerque, who is coordinating a celebration Monday after the City Council recently issued a proclamation. "We understand it's just a proclamation, but at the same time, we also understand this is the beginning of something greater."

Native Americans are the nation's smallest demographic, making up about 2 percent of the U.S. population. In recent decades, a significant number of tribal members have moved from reservations to urban areas, where a large majority live today. The shift makes the cities' resolutions and proclamations more meaningful, Estes said.

Congress set aside the second Monday of October as a federal holiday honoring Columbus in 1934. Over the years, Native Americans have slowly begun winning more recognition around the day.

[South Dakota](#) renamed Columbus Day to Native American Day in 1990, and it has been an official state holiday ever since. Berkeley, California, has observed Indigenous Peoples Day since 1992.

Parades and festivals that developed around Columbus Day have faced protests that are known for being confrontational, especially in Denver. Anna Vann, a longtime member of the Sons of Italy's Denver Lodge, recalls protests during the 1992 parade, which marked the 500th anniversary of Columbus' voyage, as the most unnerving and pivotal.

That year, protesters blocked the parade route for several hours, she said. After that, the parade wasn't held again until 2000, and it has been difficult to make it the draw it once was, she said.

"It's been a struggle to even get people to come and attend the parades as spectators," Vann said. "It's a celebration of when the Europeans came over and started their lives here. We wouldn't be where we are today if it weren't for this history."

The renewed push for Indigenous Peoples Day carries the sentiment of past decades' protests against Columbus, but it has proven less confrontational, with advocates instead finding traction at City Hall.

"They really didn't prove anything," Rey Garduno, an Albuquerque city councilman and longtime community organizer, said of the confrontational protests. "Whatever victory people took from them, you still ended up at the end of the day in the same place or even worse."

Direct Link: <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/cities-recognize-native-americans-columbus-day-34404040>

Native American Day Parade celebrates Native culture in Rapid City



Fawn Flying Horse, 8, hoop dances down Main Street with other young participants of Saturday's Native American Day Parade in downtown Rapid City.

October 11, 2015 5:30 am • [Josh Morgan, Journal staff](#)

This is a big weekend for Native Americans to celebrate their history and culture in the Black Hills.

To honor their ancestors, and celebrate the sustained strength of their culture, hundreds of Native Americans from around the country and Canada participated in the Native American Day Parade Saturday in downtown Rapid City.

The parade, which was themed "All Children Are Sacred," attracted hundreds of participants and spectators, many visitors who are in town for the Black Hills Pow Wow celebrations at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center.

The parade that featured many people in traditional dress was one of several cultural events and ceremonies honoring Native culture in advance of Native American Day on Monday.

The 29th annual Black Hills Pow Wow kicked things off Friday night and will continue until Sunday at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center.

On Monday, the official day for Native American Day in South Dakota, the Oyate Okalakiciye Prevention Coalition will hold a celebration from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Main Street Square with a mini-powwow, cultural activities and live music. Crazy Horse Memorial south of Hill City will also host its annual Native American Day celebration on Monday.

South Dakota observes Native American Day on the second Monday of October after former Gov. George S. Mickelson declared 1990 the "Year of Reconciliation" to replace Columbus Day with Native American Day.

Direct Link: http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/native-american-day-parade-celebrates-native-culture-in-rapid-city/article_b6f25b12-d2eb-57cf-bfdd-96b4dde7edec.html

This Columbus Day, Seeking the Real History of Native Americans

Posted: 10/11/2015 1:35 pm EDT Updated: 10/11/2015 5:59 pm EDT

A Q&A with Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, author of *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*.

By Mark Trecka

CHICAGO -- When Howard Zinn published *A People's History of the United States* in 1980, historian and activist Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz told Zinn that he had largely failed to

include the narratives of Native Americans. Zinn replied that it was up to Dunbar-Ortiz to write that book.

After three decades of work, she published [*An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*](#) with Beacon Press last year, challenging the version of U.S. history most Americans learn in school, a version of history that proceeds from the concepts of Manifest Destiny and the Doctrine of Discovery. Dunbar-Ortiz indicts the U.S. as a country founded on settler colonialism and genocide of Indigenous people, posing the question, "How might acknowledging the reality of U.S. history work to transform society?"



Lakota spiritual leader Chief Arvol Looking Horse attends a demonstration against the proposed Keystone XL pipeline from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico in front of the White House in Washington, DC, on January 28, 2015.

A veteran of radical leftist political movements throughout the 1960s and 70s and part-Indian herself, Dunbar-Ortiz was recruited by Native American traditionalist activist Wallace "Mad Bear" Anderson. She began working with the American Indian Movement around the 1973 standoff at Wounded Knee and also served as an expert witness in the 1974 "Sioux Treaty Hearings" in Lincoln, Nebraska, publishing *The Great Sioux Nation: Sitting in Judgment on America* in 1977.

Dunbar-Ortiz was heavily involved as a human rights advocate in the Contra War in Nicaragua from 1979 into the 1990s, spending time with with Indigenous Miskitos, U.S.-supported Contras and UN-affiliated NGOs. She frequently traveled to Nicaragua and Geneva to develop conventions on the rights and self-determination of Indigenous peoples around the world.

Between 1974 and 2009, Dunbar-Ortiz taught at California State University, but as she recently told an audience in Chicago, she spent six of those 35 years on leave without pay, traveling and working primarily with the UN on human rights issues. She has published a dozen books including three memoirs, *Red Dirt*, *Outlaw Woman* and *Blood on the Border*.

This year, Dunbar-Ortiz has toured the U.S. in support of *An Indigenous Peoples' History* and her stops have intertwined with developments tied to Indigenous rights in America. During his visit to Washington, D.C. last month, Pope Francis canonized missionary Junípero Serra, who helped the Catholic Church settle parts of California, a move which has been [met with great protest](#) from Indigenous and allied groups. Ahead of this year's Columbus Day, a growing list of U.S. cities has opted to replace the holiday with [Indigenous Peoples' Day](#). And the Congressional sale last December of [Oak Flat](#), an Apache holy site in Arizona, to a foreign mining concern has sparked a highly visible resistance movement across the country.

Dunbar-Ortiz sat down for an interview at the home of former radical activists Bernardine Dohrn and Bill Ayers in Chicago last month to discuss her dual role as a historian and activist, reflecting on these moments from the stance of a historian, albeit a kind of historian that the world had yet to embrace. She quotes William Faulkner: "The past is not even past."

Mark Trecka: You have always challenged the way that we do history. This is certainly the case with your most recent book, An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States, addressing history as written from a colonial viewpoint. But even before that, you were writing memoirs, doing memoirs as history. Your 1974 book, "The Great Sioux Nation," is an unorthodox document.

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz: At that time, oral history was not being done...

MT: And by working this more personal, unorthodox way, you're challenging the traditional narrative. But ultimately what you're doing is very subjective. Being personal is being subjective. So I wonder if the goal really is not clean objectivity but something else? Transparency? Accountability?

RDO: I think for sure. Being a historian, you are trained to "tell the facts from the documents." I have appreciated being grounded like that, but of course standard historians refuse to see themselves as being subjective. They are interpreting and yet they put it out as if it's objective information.

MT: "An Indigenous Peoples' History," although intended for a broader audience, is somewhat rigorous, if not academic. So who is reading it?

RDO: The publisher, not just me, has never had this experience with a book. Beacon Press has been publishing since 1846, they were an abolitionist press originally and they have never had this experience. They have never, for instance, sold out the first printing of a hardback. And they've published Cornel West. My book was hardly reviewed anywhere; it was reviewed negatively by Publishers Weekly. I was so devastated last July when they advanced these anonymous reviews. Even the Library Journal had big, bold, capital letters, "NOT RECOMMENDED." (Laughs) They just dissed it!

MT: Why?

RDO: Oh, it's just, you know, "She's talking about the United States as a colonial power, what an *absurd* idea."

MT: In the book you document that land policy is the way the US has done colonialism differently than other places. And it still goes on, doesn't it?

RDO: The more I researched, the more I came to understand that the US government created private property as real estate, where this was the most important portable commodity. And not only that but that they had mapped that whole plan out. You can go read it online now: the Northwest Ordinance. Before the Constitution, they had a colonial plan. They called it that. And they had all the land broken down and how they would support an independent government without British subsidies. And that was it, they would recruit settlers and sell them land. By selling plots of land to plantation owners as they moved the Natives out, just expanding that land base. Before the development of industrial agriculture, the primary accumulation of wealth was the land sales, from the founding of the United States until 1840. That's a long time to build a basis. So real estate is that sacred. Not sacred land like the Indians mean, but sacred capital.

MT: That mentality, ownership of property as being sacred, starting with the Northwest Ordinance but ending ...

RDO: Never! And with immigration, this is the carrot that's put up: that you can own your own piece of property. And you too can be a capitalist on equal playing ground. You're starting and you can build it up.

MT: You say in the final chapter of "An Indigenous Peoples' History" that the US project is the same today as it ever was. How does that play out?

RDO: This is the first new book I've published since 2005 and that was on the Contra War [Blood on the Border] and I went around the country giving talks. I wrote that not just as a third memoir but because when George H. W. Bush came to power, he reappointed to the Middle East everyone who was carrying out the Contra War. Every one of them. One by one. I think there were 23 that we counted. Elliott Abrams ... John Negroponte was put as the first person in Iraq. He had run the whole Contra War.

MT: Then it's not even much of a stretch. You're talking about the same people that have done the same things in various places.

RDO: Exactly. And the military inheritance from father to son to grandson, you can follow that throughout the Indian Wars, then to the Philippines, then to Cuba, conquest, then they're in World War I and their sons are the generals of World War II. And it's especially pernicious. You know, I see the post-Civil War, that reconstruction period, as so interesting. But one thing that gets left out is that in that compromise, it wasn't just like pulling the occupying army out to enforce reconstruction, it was also leaving the army there.

Because all the major army bases and people who join the army, even voluntarily now, are from the South. They're still white southerners. And the South is just crawling with bases. So it's a very Southern culture. It's a very Southern, militaristic culture. So in some ways, the Confederacy won the military side of it after all. It was kind of a division of government: we'll take the civilian, you take the army.

MT: Are you working on anything right now? Another book?

RDO: I have another Beacon Press book. I took on a coauthor [Dina Gilio-Whitaker]. It's part of a series they're doing called MythBusting. Bill Fletcher Jr. did one on trade unions titled, "[They're Bankrupting Us, and 20 Other Myths About Trade Unions](#)." There is one by Noam Chomsky's daughter, Aviva Chomsky. Hers is called, "[They're Taking Our Jobs, and 20 Other Myths About Immigration](#)." They are both really, really good. So the one we're doing, my writing partner has chosen the working title, "There Are No Indians Left, and Twenty Other Myths About Native Americans."

MT: That is definitely something powerful in "An Indigenous Peoples' History," the idea of the myth of the last Indian. It is really so insidious. It's so invisible. It isn't that I thought all the Indians were gone. But there is something about it...

RDO: It's just impressed on people. It's so different from the Civil Rights Movement, which is all about too much visibility. African Americans are always noticed, always. Same with Mexican immigrants. There's a paranoia: *too many of them, too loud*, all these myths. Instead, Native Americans are solemn, quiet. *Absent*. They're just "not there."

MT: It's sort of difficult for a lot of people to wrap their heads around. The goals are very different, those of the Civil Rights Movement and those of Native American movements.

RDO: This book is a tool for how to present the Native issues and also the tremendous diversity among Native people. Most Native Americans, it's like being invisible. It's a very different oppression. Because they can perform being a normal American. Everyone is performing, like immigrants, they have to perform being an American and then they go home -- they have a dual life. So Native Americans in some ways are more like foreigners that have to play American.

And they can do that and they can be very good at it. That part on the narrative of dysfunction in my book, I often read that at book talks. On the other hand I describe Pine Ridge and the poverty and all and how they won't take \$1.5 billion [as reimbursement for the US government's appropriation of Lakota Sioux' sacred Black Hills, the site of Mount Rushmore] -- that kind of blows people's minds. They think, "This must be something I just don't understand."

MT: There are times I wonder, why not take that money and do something that furthers the cause of your ideology? That number!

RDO: And so few people to divide it among. Well, they used to do that. Since World War II, they set up the court of Indian Land Claims where tribal governments could present all the land that was taken -- and the Sioux did that. They were denied the land claim. The Black Hills case where the Supreme Court ordered all that money to be given to the Sioux, that was decided in 1980 and had been in court since 1947, just sitting there. They allowed no restitution of land, just reimbursement. And because of the gift giving, Native Americans don't spend that money on themselves, they give it away to families and friends -- there's so much need -- so it evaporates. Within a year, within two years. So even that \$1.5 billion, in the end, wouldn't go that far.

MT: So you just think it wouldn't mean to the Sioux what it sounds like it means?

RDO: No, it's that the money would clear the title. That they would never again be able to [fight for the possession of the Black Hills]. But that resiliency, that's how people have survived. There is an ethics in that that you can't then translate into each individual native person acting ethically, but it shows how a collective can make better people of people.

MT: Do you see that with the struggle to protect Oak Flat? The Apache Stronghold movement? Do you see it happening there? It's a different story, of course...

RDO: Yes. It's a different story, but there is quite a bit of determination. And also in Hawaii now, the observatory that University of Arizona is putting on top of a mountain on the Big Island. That's a really sacred area. There are so many sacred areas there and they've had huge demonstrations; very hard, rugged area to get up to. So there's a lot of land occupations now, blockaded; all the pipeline things. Yeah, Native people are -- there's a huge movement.

MT: Do you have hope that the movement to save Oak Flat will create change? Do you think it is successful at least in terms of visibility?

RDO: The Apaches have been pretty strongly recolonized. They were really decimated. Thirty years war against them, the post-Civil War military machine, high-powered weapons, automatic weapons, Gatling guns ... so, they were pretty smashed and scared. You know, there's this timidity. It's really great to see these young people organizing. If we don't understand this as a settler colonial nation -- even if there were no Indians left, that they had managed to kill them all off, it would still be this country. It would be worse because there wouldn't be any testimony as to what it used to be like, no one would know, it would be a complete secret. And anyone trying to change it would still have to deal with these things.

Mark Trecka is a writer, performer and artist currently based in Chicago. He has traveled extensively and performed in over 20 countries in North America, Europe and Asia.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/the-groundtruth-project/this-columbus-day-seeking_b_8277006.html

Indigenous Peoples Days: In honor of the past

‘Welcoming back the Salmon’ highlights a day of celebration, ceremony



18th annual Indigenous Peoples Days

From left, Amber Neeley, Josiah Ortiz, 2 1/2, Asher Perla, 8, and Logan Hendrix, 12, look at a crawdad during the 18th annual Indigenous Peoples Days celebrated "Awakening Kulu" in honor of a historic fishing village confluence of Dry Creek and the Yuba River Saturday, Oct. 10, 2015 at Sycamore Ranch in Browns Valley.

Posted: Saturday, October 10, 2015 10:52 pm | *Updated: 10:55 pm, Mon Oct 12, 2015.*

by Kirk Barron kbarron@appealdemocrat.com

The "Spirit Runners" jogged nearly 10 miles through the morning to bring the honored guest to a traditional Maidu "Welcoming back the Salmon" ceremony.

Tsi Akim Maidu elder Fred "Coyote" Downey welcomed the runners, and the salmon they retrieved from the salmon hunters, with ceremonial smoke as they crossed Dry Creek into Sycamore Ranch on Saturday.

More than a hundred people gathered around the ceremony site where an elder prepared the salmon and sent the meat to a traditional fire pit along the creek bank, signaling the start of the salmon feast and pot luck at the 18th annual Indigenous Peoples Days.

Shelby Leung of Reno is a tribal member of Tsi Akim Maidu and joined the "Spirit Runners" for a third year.

"I have ancestral roots to the area and Kulu, the fishing village that was here," Leung said. "I want to raise awareness of the salmon, the people and their struggle."

The runners who carried the salmon and the traditional medicine are supposed to fast for three days leading up to the ceremony, and anyone is welcome to join, though it is a commitment, Leung said.

Throughout the day, people from around the world shared their stories and cultures in the shade of walnut trees, and children caught crawdads and played in the creek.

Mike Tomson spent the morning sharing wisdom and tales he heard during his formative years while living on the Palau Islands in Micronesia in a matriarchal society without electricity or running water.

"I was given a lot of knowledge and stories by the older people, and for a long time I wondered why I was gifted those things," Tomson said.

The Grass Valley resident returned to the United States after living on Palau from the time he was 9 years old until he was 18 and began combining what he learned with his new world culture. He came from a place where the largest power source was important AA batteries and history was an oral tradition.

"In Palauan language, there is no word for 'I'm sorry' and no word for 'I want,'" he said.

Gerald "Big Ears" Ryberg shared his stories with anyone who was willing to listen as he made traditional fry bread in preparation for the salmon feast and pot luck.

"We've been doing this forever," Ryberg said. "All our ancestors have for hundreds of years."

A member of the Tsi Akim Maidu, Ryberg enjoyed watching the nearly 200 schoolchildren who visited the site Friday to learn about indigenous cultures through stories, song and dance.

Downey said the children learned about "our connection with all the elements around us."

Later in the evening, the California Bear Dancers performed for the first time in more than two years, and the "Awakening Kulu" activities persisted into the night.

The third day of the four-day event begins at 9 a.m. today at Sycamore Ranch with Thoz Women at the Mother Drum. The final day of the event will be a radio broadcast from 7 a.m.- 9 p.m. on KVMR (89.5 FM).

Know & Go

- What: 18th annual Indigenous Peoples Days

- Where: Sycamore Ranch (5390 Highway 20, Browns Valley)
- When: 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Schedule

- 9 a.m.: Opening ceremony; Thoz Women at the Mother Drum
- 11 a.m.: Women's Circle.
- 2 p.m.: Descendants' Circle.
- 5:30 p.m.: Prout Memorial Potluck Dinner.

CONTACT Reporter Kirk Barron at 749-4796.

Direct Link: http://www.appeal-democrat.com/news/indigenous-peoples-days-in-honor-of-the-past/article_43bd58a0-6fdc-11e5-a5aa-033fbc5478b8.html

Native American Youth: Stop Treating Our Culture Like A Costume

HuffPost spoke with a dozen Native youth about their schooling, Barack Obama and those sports mascots.

[Rebecca Klein](#) Education Editor, The Huffington Post

Posted: 10/12/2015 08:06 AM EDT | Edited: 10/12/2015 02:36 PM EDT



From left: Leslie Locklear, Savannah Ingram, Jessica Bernardino, Teddy McCullough, Celeste Terry, Breanna Potter.

Statistics regarding Native American youth in 2015 are bleak. Suicide is [the second leading cause of death](#) for Native youth aged 15-24. [Natives have the lowest high school graduation](#) rate out of every ethnic group in the country and some of the lowest standardized test scores. Rates of poverty are high.

But despite these challenges, Native American youth feel tremendous hope for the future.

The Huffington Post recently partnered with United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY), a national network of Native youth, for an exclusive survey of Native Americans aged 18 to 24. Nearly 40 percent of the Native population is under the age of 24, compared to 33 percent of the general population. The survey -- which had 65 participants -- sought to learn more about the day-to-day lives and educational experiences of a population that faces many misperceptions. We followed up with nearly a dozen of the survey respondents for longer interviews.

Some responses were unexpected and uplifting. Many participants said they have no doubt that they will overcome challenges and find success. They have faith that if they work hard and stay focused, they can be greater than their circumstances. Many are optimistic about their lives and the future of their people.

Other responses were unsurprising. Many Natives said they are rarely afforded the luxury of seeing their experiences accurately depicted in popular culture, school curriculum or national policy. They regularly face misunderstandings about their culture and history. Some have been bullied by teachers and classmates who view them more as nothing more than stereotypes.

The survey responses we received reflect the voices of a self-selecting group that is already involved in UNITY programming and thus likely to have a strong support group of Native peers. They are a diverse group, more female than male, from many different tribes and places. They are not representative of Native youth at large, but reflect a small slice of the Native American youth experience.

Below are some themes that emerged from their stories.

Native American Youth Are Optimistic About The Future



Manuel Balce Ceneta/AP President Obama joins members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Nation for a celebration in June, 2014.

Many Native youth are aware of the negative statistics impacting their nations but optimistic about their own future.

Some of this optimism may be due to the efforts of the president.

In 2014, President Barack Obama became only the fourth sitting president to visit a Native American reservation. Since that historic visit to Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota, he has given unprecedented levels of attention to this population. At the 2014 White House Tribal Nations Gathering, the administration announced the launch of Generation Indigenous, an initiative that increases funding to Native communities and tries to engage Native youth. It involves new investments in Native communities and efforts to engage Native youth. As part of the initiative, the White House hosted the first ever Tribal Youth Gathering this summer, where First Lady Michelle Obama spoke.

"I'm so proud of you all. I'm proud of this gathering. I know you all can do this. I believe in you, and I can't wait to see all you will achieve," she said at the gathering.

For some youth, Obama's efforts mean their culture is finally getting the attention it needs.

"Even though Native people have a voice, we are a small minority of the population. I do appreciate that we have not been forgotten in this administration as we have been before and that makes me hopeful that change will continue," said Leslie Locklear, 24, of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina. "That makes me excited, but also nervous about the next presidential election."

Teddy McCullough, who works at the Center for Native American Youth, agrees with Locklear.

“He’s not the first politician to visit Native communities or have natives come to the White House but he’s definitely the first president who has made a deep commitment and is showing that he means it,” said 22-year-old McCullough, who belongs to the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians.

Celeste Terry, 23, takes pride in how engaged her peers are.

“Just seeing the movement amongst the youth right now, it’s amazing. It’s so inspiring,” said Terry.

Mary Kim Titla, executive director of UNITY, knows what Native American youth often have to overcome to be successful. But she sees drive, commitment and determination among the kids she interacts with.

“We see all of the negative statistics and the youth themselves know that when it comes to social ills they are among the worst in terms of suicide, teen pregnancy, drug abuse, you name it,” said Titla. “They are keenly aware of that, and despite that, the majority of them, I would say, are committed to overcoming all barriers and want to be among positive statistics.”

In School, Native American Students Rarely See Their Culture Depicted Accurately



Native American history is rarely taught in a nuanced context that goes beyond whitewashed versions of Thanksgiving or Christopher Columbus. Research from Sarah Shear, a professor at Pennsylvania State University in Altoona, found that during the 2011-2012 school year, [87 percent of state history standards failed to touch upon Native American life after 1900](#).

“In the telling of U.S. history, there is a specific narrative that really does not lend itself to incorporating the voices of people who are not considered members of the dominant cultural group,” Shear told HuffPost last year.

In K-12 public schools, Native youth rarely get the opportunity to learn about their own history.

"There was one page in the entire history book that covered Native Americans in general," said Teddy McCullough, 22. "It focused on Thanksgiving and that was about it before it moved onto the rest of the history and then Natives weren't brought up at all."

When Collin Church was in eighth grade, one of his teachers referred to Native Americans as "savages," said Church, a member of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians.

The teacher said Natives "were easy to take out because we were primitive and uncivilized," recalled Church, now 21. "At the time I was discovering myself that I was Native American ... But with what school system was pushing it gave me huge confusion."

Savannah Ingram, 19, realized as a child that if she wanted to learn about her history, she would have to do it outside of school.

"In third and fourth grade is when you really only learn about Native American history and that's it ... Otherwise I had to learn my entire native history through my tribe through tribal events," said Ingram, who belongs to the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

Native American Youth Are Tired Of The Stereotypes And Costumes



Carolyn Kaster/AP Verlin Deer In Water, a member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma shows his t-shirt during an interview in Washington, Monday, Oct. 7, 2013, calling for the Washington Redskins NFL football team to change its name.

Celeste Terry remembers walking into a classroom her junior year of high school and seeing a student-made poster that inaccurately depicted her tribe, the Oglala Lakota. The

student had gotten an A+ on the project, despite it being riddled with factual errors. After years of facing bullying from peers about her Native American heritage and indifference from teachers, it felt like a breaking point for Terry.

Terry explained the poster's inaccuracies to the teacher who had graded it, but the teacher didn't seem interested asking the student to correct it. Soon after the incident, Terry decided to drop out.

Terry ended up going back to school and earning her GED and is set to enroll in a local university in January. But she remains dogged by stereotypes. After spending two years working at a transportation services company called Navajo Express, Terry was driven to quit several weeks ago after the company gave employees T-shirts misrepresenting the Navajo.

The T-shirt shows a Lakota style headdress, even though the company is named for the Navajos. The faceless character wearing the headdress has blue eyes.

"I see this image and I'm like, 'Oh my god, is this a joke?' I was so angry," said Terry. "I immediately started crying." (Navajo Express declined to comment.)



Terry's experiences speak to just two examples of life in a nation where offensive representations of Native Americans are allowed to flourish. The most prominent example of this is the existence of insensitive Native American mascots and team names. A 2014 analysis from FiveThirtyEight found [2,129 sports teams names that reference](#) Native Americans.

These team names can have a damaging impact on Native youth.

"[American Indian and Alaska Native] students across the country attend K-12 and postsecondary schools that still maintain racist and derogatory mascots. Research shows

that these team names and mascots can establish an unwelcome and hostile learning environment," argues [a 2014 report from the Center for American Progress](#). "The presence of AI/AN mascots directly results in lower self-esteem and mental health for AI/AN adolescents and young adults."

Luckily, schools, teams and companies that use offensive Native American imagery are increasingly under fire. In September, the [California State Assembly voted to ban schools from using "Redskins" nicknames and mascots](#). In October, [Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper \(D\) created a commission](#) that brings together tribes, community members and state agencies to foster a productive dialogue on the subject. In 2012, the [Oregon State Board of Education banned Native American](#) mascots and team names from schools.

Caitlin Bordeaux, 24, is a teacher at a Bureau of Indian Education School, meaning all of her students are Native. Her school has a Native American mascot, she says, but not one that misrepresents her culture.

"[Native American mascots] should be updated because they still portray stereotypes and show that we're all the same. But all tribes aren't the same. Not every tribe uses headdresses," said Bordeaux of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe.

Eshtakaba Lafromboise, 19, thinks sports teams are in the wrong when they promote a "racist term and offensive term" for Native Americans. "If they used any other race, I'm sure people would be on that right away," said Lafromboise, a Sioux.

"Those things, they mean something," he said. "A lot of people don't seem to understand."

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/native-youth-survey_56171dcbe4b0e66ad4c745cb

Forced Removal of Native American Children From Parents Exposed in 13 Minutes

By [Phillip Martin](#)



Filming "First Light" in Maine
Credit First Light

A 13 minute documentary about the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\)](#), set up in Maine to investigate the forcible removal of Native American children from their homes over many years, debuts today.

For hundreds of years, Federal and state governments wrested Native American children from their parents and placed them in institutions of one kind or another or in the homes of white families in an effort to “civilize the savage born”. This practice and policy left many of those children psychologically battered for the rest of their lives. One Native American woman told Maine's Truth and Reconciliation commissioners that she still has nightmares from the coming of age experience.

“All we did was beg for our foster mothers to hug us and say they loved us. My baby sister and I sat in a tub of bleach one time trying to convince each other that we’re getting white. And then we knew they would accept us. Where was the state? Where was the state? They were supposed to have been our guardian. But where were they?”

An excerpt from "First Light", a 13-minute short documentary film about the work of the [Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\)](#), described as the first such task force in US history to investigate forced removals.

Adam Mazo of Somerville’s Upstander Project is the co-producer of First Light:

“Maine has led the way in trying to address this crisis of Native American children removed from their families at alarming rates.”

According to a 1976 report commissioned by the Association on American Indian Affairs, as many as one third of Native American children were separated from their families between 1941 and 1967.

“This problem of Native American children being taken from their families is not unique to Maine. And it’s been going on for decades and centuries,” said Mazo.

“Even in the 1970’s, data was gathered that found that one in four native children were living away from their families, whether it’s through adoption, foster care, institutionalization, prison, boarding schools. You had a whole 25 percent of Native American children living away from their parents and their tribes.”

Often explicitly racist rationales for removal have changed over the decades, but each year across the US hundreds of Native American children are separated from their parents. Maine’s *Wabanaki* Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission is modeled on the process of investigation begun in Argentina and popularized in post-apartheid South Africa. Credit for its creation in 2013 is given to the Chiefs of *Maine’s* five tribes in collaboration with the state’s infamously conservative governor, Paul LePage.

“It makes sense that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission would start in Maine—the eastern most point in the United States,” says Mazo. “And they [Native Americans] hope it would spread across the country. Look at what has happened to Native American children through the child welfare system and say ‘let’s make a change and find ways for native children to be able to stay with their families.’”

“First Light” is the first in a series of shorts on Native Americans to precede the feature film “Dawnland” slated for release in early 2017.

Direct Link: <http://wgbhnews.org/post/forced-removal-native-american-children-parents-exposed-13-minutes>

Native Americans' Day: Youth see good, bad of Sioux Falls



Anthony Iron Moccasin reflects on culture, prejudice and belonging with Argus Leader reporter Steve Young.

[Steve Young](#), sxyoung@argusleader.com 6:21 a.m. CDT October 12, 2015

They get annoyed by references to scalping.

Disappointed with friends who seem fixated only on stereotypes.

And mildly put off when they're working the counter at Hy-Vee or McDonald's and some customer scurries away so she doesn't have to interact with the Indian.

"I'll be working the express counter, you know, where you can only have 12 items or less," says Anthony Iron Moccasin, a 19-year-old senior at Washington High School who works at a local grocery store. "And the person will, like, look at me and see that I'm open, but they'll go to the next register. I mean really, I feel like I'm being discriminated against because they won't come to my register. But hey ... it makes me do less work."

And he laughs.

With Native Americans' Day upon us Monday, Argus Leader Media sat down with nine tribal students at Washington High and asked them to provide a perspective on life in the city from a demographic group that numbers a little more than 1,000 youth in the Sioux Falls School District today.

At ages 15 to 19, they're too young to remember a time 30, 40 years ago when Native Americans in the city would identify themselves as Italian to avoid the racism they perceived as being inherent in Sioux Falls. In fact, today's students all insisted that they feel much more welcome and a part of the community, though with some exceptions.

Here are excerpts from that round-table discussion:

Question: What is it like to be a Native American living in Sioux Falls today?

Bryce Redwing, 17, junior: "I feel we are different from Caucasians and get treated different all the time. Like I have people shoot me dirty looks all the time. I'm at work and they don't, like, want to touch me. It's weird. I'm just, like, whatever. I'm just going to walk away. I'm not going to take offense to it."

Zayda Zuniga, 16, junior: "I really don't feel a difference at all. I feel like I'm not discriminated against in any way, with like schooling and everything else. If you do as much as any other person would, I just don't feel that it would be any different for me living in Sioux Falls compared to a Caucasian."

Question: Do you think your culture is respected in this school and community?

Iron Moccasin: "There is one kid I can think of; he always makes jokes about scalping. I don't really take it too seriously, but it does get annoying. It's a daily thing."

Question: Do you find that offensive?

Iron Moccasin: "I don't find any of it offensive. I honestly don't know why. I mean growing up, I never really cared to know too much about my own culture. I mean, I probably tried to run away from it more than trying to learn about it."

Mackenzie Lee, 17, senior: "In this school, I feel we have a lot of respect because we honor our culture here, and we talk about it. I don't really ever hear anything that's disrespectful. We have, like, our showcase area out there and the murals, and in the gym there is the mural ... and we are the Warriors."



Bryce Redwing reflects on culture, prejudice and belonging with Argus Leader reporter Steve Young.

Question: Do you find the school's Warriors nickname offensive?

Lee: "I don't find it disrespectful at all because Warrior has never been once used in a derogatory term, as Redskins has been. And it was given to us by a native chief."

Question: Would you be more offended if you were called the Washington High Redskins?

Lee: "Yeah, probably, because that is a derogatory term."

Redwing: "The way I see it is, you look at all the football teams and all these other things that are named after Native Americans. ... Warriors and Redskins and what not. They're going to do it anyway. You can't stop it. As long as you don't take it in a derogatory way, you can just shrug it off and walk away."

Question: Do you feel like your life in Sioux Falls is any different because you're Native American?

Redwing: "I honestly don't. I've been to worse places than here where I've been treated much differently. (In those places) I felt completely like an outsider, like I didn't even belong there. Like, all of the people would look at me. I literally lived in a town where people would try to run over me in their cars. Here, I'm just another one of the GP (general population)."

Question: So do you feel like you are part of this community, an insider as opposed to an outsider?

Lee: "I'd say I feel like both. ... When we go to school, I know there's quite a few of us, but I feel like there's still not enough. I wish that ... because, of course, the African American community and the white community are a lot larger ... I think it would be, like friends-wise, a lot more comforting if there were more Native Americans here. But I do feel like an insider because when we do have our classes and stuff together, we connect pretty well."

Question: Are there moments when you feel unwelcome or disrespected because you're Native American?

Lee: "I have multiple friends that are white, and they don't honor my culture as I do. They see it as a way that I can cheat on a lot of things. ... like how I can get money for college. They don't understand the reasoning behind it as to why we get that money, and they just think it's not fair and so they continue to say things like that. I don't acknowledge it. I mean, they're my friends for other reasons. But I don't like when they talk down about my culture and they say, 'Well I don't understand why you drunk natives get money and we don't get anything.' "

Question: How do you feel about those stereotypes?

Lee: "... When other people don't honor (my culture), it's like they don't realize how much it means to me. They think it's funny. 'Oh, we're going to scalp you.' And then they run around making, like, war whoops. I just say, 'Yeah, OK, that's not very funny. Stop.' And they think it's a joke. The thing is, they only look at the stereotypical people from a culture. They don't look beyond that. So of course, if they know the stereotypes, they're going to try to find anybody that does follow the stereotypes to show that they're true. But there's multiple people who don't follow the stereotypes."

Question: Is it a challenge in this community to stay connected to your culture?



Zayda Zuniga talks about her opinion of Native American Day and how Native Americans are treated in Sioux Falls, Oct 7, 2015. (Photo: Elisha Page - Argus Leader)

Lee: "It's a dying culture. It's a dying language. I mean, they offer multiple things at the school ... a Native American Studies class. And they have Lakota classes. But it's always a struggle because you're never going to know ... it's never going to be from an elder handed to you or told to you by another elder. So you're learning it all from a book, and of course not every detail is going to be in a book."

Question: Do you not have access to others who can share your culture with you?

Riley Taborda, 18, senior: "There's always an opportunity (when they go to their home reservations) to learn about it. It's a little hard for me to stay connected because, actually we moved here from Arizona. So I'm Navajo. I got that really big distance barrier between here and learning my culture. But every time I go down to see my grandmother, she's always telling stories. My sisters will go out and do art on canvasses. That's where we'll learn. But since we've got that huge 24-hour drive, it's kind of hard to constantly go back there and keep learning."

Question: So does the celebration of Native Americans' Day mean anything to you?

Zuniga: "Yes. ... Most of the other states are celebrating Columbus Day. I feel like it's an honor that we're celebrating Native American Day because ... it didn't really make sense why we would be celebrating Columbus Day, especially in our region where the Native American people are plentiful. It just doesn't make any sense to me how we're celebrating Columbus when he was the start of all our genocide. It was just terrible."



Zayda Zuniga reflects on culture, prejudice and belonging with Argus Leader reporter Steve Young.

Question: And do you get a sense that everybody else who is not Native American cares about this day?

Zuniga: "I feel like maybe not everyone will care, but they all know about it and they're informed, where in other places they don't even know."

Taborda: "I'll be talking with my friends, about whatever, and maybe somebody will say something like, 'Oh, this test is on Monday,' and someone offhand will say, 'Hey, no we

don't; it's Native American Day.' They won't say Columbus Day, they'll say Native American Day. I think that's good that they recognize it. They're not deliberately saying Columbus Day to spite me. They're adjusting, so that's good."



Bryce Redwing reflects on culture, prejudice and belonging with Argus Leader reporter Steve Young.

Native Americans' Day events

Two events honoring Native Americans' Day are being held in Sioux Falls. Sponsored by All Souls Church, the South Dakota Humanities Council and the Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation, the events are:

Sunday

Yankton Sioux tribal member and local artist Jerry Fogg will give a presentation called Native Soul at 10 a.m. Sunday at All Souls Church, 2222 S. Cliff Ave. The Eagle Spirit Drum Group, featuring George Eagleman and his sons, will open and close the program. Fogg will take questions after his program, starting at approximately 11 a.m.

Monday

A Native-White Relations forum with former state Secretary of Tribal Relations J.R. LaPlante will begin at 7 p.m. in the Belbas Theater at the Washington Pavilion, 301 S. Main Ave. LaPlante, a lawyer and enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, will take questions after offering remarks. Again, the Eagle Spirit Drum Group will open and close the program. A social with art on display by Fogg will begin at 6:30 p.m.

For more information on the two events, go to www.sfu.org/journey



Anthony Iron Moccasin talks about his opinion of Native American Day and how Native Americans are treated in Sioux Falls, Oct 7, 2015. (Photo: Elisha Page - Argus Leader)

Direct Link: <http://www.argusleader.com/story/news/2015/10/12/tribal-youth-see-good-bad-city/73599400/>

More cities celebrating 'Indigenous Peoples Day' amid effort to abolish Columbus Day

By [Peter Holley](#) October 12



Travis Mazawaficuna of the Dakota Nation (Sioux) tribe arrives outside the United Nations in 2013. (Adrees Latif/Reuters file)

For the past 81 years, Americans have celebrated Columbus Day on the second Monday of October. That won't change this year, but a growing number of cities are seeking to abolish the traditional holiday and replace it with a day that acknowledges and celebrates the millions of people who were already living here when Christopher Columbus arrived.

This year, the recast holiday known as Indigenous Peoples Day will take place in at least nine cities across the United States, including in Albuquerque, N.M., Anadarko, Okla., Portland, Ore., St. Paul, Minn., and Olympia, Wash., [according to the Associated Press](#).

Last year, the Seattle City Council unanimously voted to change the federal Columbus Day holiday to Indigenous Peoples Day, making it the second major U.S. city after Minneapolis to adopt the change, according to Reuters.

The holiday's new designation follows a decades-long push by Native American activists in dozens of cities across the country to abolish Columbus Day, and they have had mixed but increasingly successful results, according to the AP.

The next community to consider the change is Oklahoma City, where local leaders are scheduled this week to vote on a bill implementing Indigenous Peoples Day, [according to NBC affiliate KFOR](#).

"This is something that I've struggled with for a long time," Sarah Adams-Cornell told the station last month. "The fact that our country, our state and our city celebrate this holiday around this man who murdered and enslaved and raped indigenous people and decimated an entire population."

In cities that have implemented a new holiday, activists described the change as the first step in a larger effort to reclaim a more accurate telling of history. For those communities, parades celebrating Columbus ignore a violent past that led to hundreds of years of disease, colonial rule and genocidal extermination following the Italian explorer's accidental trip to the Americas, according to the AP.

"For the Native community here, Indigenous Peoples Day means a lot," Nick Estes of Albuquerque, who is involved in planning the city's Indigenous Peoples celebration scheduled for Monday, told the AP. "We actually have something. We understand it's just a proclamation, but at the same time, we also understand this is the beginning of something greater."

In a blog post published by the Huffington Post, Bill Bigelow, co-director of the [Zinn Education Project](#), which "promotes and supports the teaching of people's history in middle and high school classrooms across the country," explained why many historians and indigenous communities find Columbus's legacy so troubling.

"Columbus initiated the trans-Atlantic slave trade, in early February 1494, first sending several dozen enslaved Taínos to Spain," Bigelow wrote. The following year, Columbus ramped up his attempt at making slavery a profitable enterprise, by rounding up 1,600 Taínos, sending the "best" 550 of those to Spain and telling his fellow colonialists they were free to take whoever remained.

"Let us in the name of the Holy Trinity go on sending all the slaves that can be sold," Columbus [wrote](#).

Congress made the second Monday of October a federal holiday honoring Columbus in 1934.. The effort to rename the day began to see results in 1990, when South Dakota renamed Columbus Day to Native American Day, according to the AP. Two years later, Berkeley, Calif., began observing Indigenous Peoples Day.

Columbus Day supporters argue that the explorer symbolizes “centuries of cultural exchange between America and Europe,” according to the AP. But in years past, supporters of the holiday, such as Anna Vann — a member of the Sons of Italy’s Denver Lodge — have been unable to ignore the controversy surrounding the holiday.

“It’s been a struggle to even get people to come and attend the parades as spectators,” Vann said. “It’s a celebration of when the Europeans came over and started their lives here. We wouldn’t be where we are today if it weren’t for this history.”

The effort to change Columbus Day’s designation in Seattle last year provoked outrage among some Italian Americans there, Reuters reported.

“Italians are intensely offended,” Seattle native Lisa Marchese said. “For decades, Italian Americans celebrated not the man, but the symbol of Columbus Day. That symbol means we honor the legacy of our ancestors who immigrated to Seattle, overcame poverty, a language barrier and above all, discrimination.”

Direct Link: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/10/11/more-cities-celebrating-indigenous-peoples-day-as-effort-to-abolish-columbus-day-grows/>

City to consider creation of Indigenous Peoples Day

Holiday to recognize contributions, history of Native Americans

By [Cory Smith](#) - VJ, Reporter

Posted: 10:41 PM, October 11, 2015 Updated: 10:41 PM, October 11, 2015

SAN ANTONIO, Texas - Later this month San Antonio city council members will vote on a proposal to establish Indigenous Peoples Day.

According to a statement from mayor Ivy Taylor, Indigenous Peoples Day "officially recognizes the importance of the many peoples and cultures that have played a role in shaping our history."

Antonio Diaz, spokesperson for the Texas Indigenous Council, has been calling for the creation of Indigenous Peoples Day for several years.

"That's what we've been asking for for years - for them to do the right thing," Diaz said. "We are the descendants of the original inhabitants of this land, and our history has been swept aside."

Members of the local Christopher Columbus Italian Society (CCIS) support the proposal, though they disagree with the characterization of Columbus' legacy by some Native American activists who are calling for the elimination of Columbus Day.

"Nobody wants to deny them a day or their time in the limelight here," CCIS Board Chairman Frank Monaco said. "We don't have any problem with them celebrating Indigenous Peoples Day. We do not want our day disrupted or taken the place of by Indigenous Peoples Day."

Since announcing the city's intentions the question of whether San Antonio would continue to celebrate Columbus Day has been raised. That led Mayor Ivy Taylor to take to Twitter to say "the proposal put forward to recognize Indigenous Peoples Day would not replace Christopher Columbus Day."

Though Columbus Day this year falls on the same day as the first celebrations of Indigenous Peoples Day, the contending sides agree that the two days should remain separate.

"We have no trouble with them having their own day," Monaco said.

"I think they should be separate we don't honor Christopher Columbus he is a villain. He should not be honored by any people," Diaz said.

The city is expected to vote on the measure in three weeks.

Direct Link: <http://www.ksat.com/news/city-to-consider-creation-of-indigenous-peoples-day>

Governor declares today Indigenous Peoples' Day in Alaska

Paula Dobbyn / KTUU

POSTED: 11:00 AM AKDT Oct 12, 2015 UPDATED: 07:18 PM AKDT Oct 12, 2015

Gov. Bill Walker has signed an [executive proclamation](#) declaring today as Indigenous Peoples' Day in Alaska. The announcement comes as growing number of cities and schools shift away from Columbus Day celebrations.

"The state opposes systematic racism toward Indigenous People of Alaska or any Alaskans of any origin and promotes policies and practices that reflect the experiences of

Indigenous People, ensure greater access and opportunity, and honor our nation's indigenous roots, history and contributions," the proclamation states in part.

Walker's move to recast the federal holiday in Alaska came on the heels of a similar announcement by Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz this morning at the kick-off of the Elders and Youth Conference.

The city proclamation calls Anchorage the state's "biggest village" as home to more than 23,000 Alaska Natives.

Elders and Youth is a series of meetings and events that marks the start of the Alaska Federation of Natives conference later this week in Anchorage.

Walker's proclamation notes that Alaska is joining more and more cities that have recognized the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples' Day, "creating an opportunity to promote appreciation, tolerance, understanding, friendship, and partnerships among Indigenous Peoples and all Alaskans," according to the proclamation.

University of Alaska Anchorage Psychology professor E.J.R. David is among those who support today's move.

"Alaska has been recognized as one of the most racially and culturally diverse states in the country, and this effort to honor the past and current contributions of our Native brothers and sisters clearly shows that the state regards such diversity as an asset and as a source of community strength," said David in a news release.

David directs UAA's Alaska Native Community Advancement in Psychology Program and is a founding member of community action groups WeAreAnchorage and Alaskero Partnership Organizers. He drafted the city and state proclamations, according to the release.

First Alaskans Institute President and CEO Liz Medicine Crow also praised the proclamations.

"These proclamations are historic, bringing us together to acknowledge the special and profound role of the indigenous peoples of Alaska. Gunalcheesh, Haw.aa, to the governor and the mayor for their visionary leadership - lifting Alaskans up into the next 10,000 years," Crow said in the release.

Direct Link: <http://www.ktuu.com/news/news/walker-changes-columbus-day-to-indigenous-peoples-day-in-alaska/35795702>

On second Indigenous Peoples Day, more work to be done

by [Chetanya Robinson](#) - Oct 11, 2015



Celebrations at Daybreak Star marking the first Indigenous Peoples' Day in 2014. (Courtesy photo by Jonathan H. Lee)

Last year Seattle grabbed the entire nation's attention by establishing the second Monday in October as Indigenous Peoples' Day.

The City Council and School Board both [voted unanimously](#) to celebrate the culture and contributions of Native Americans — on the same day that the federal government marks as Columbus Day.

So what's in store for Seattle's second Indigenous Peoples' Day? Were last year's resolutions more than just a symbolic gesture?

Matt Remle, Native American liaison at Marysville-Pilchuck High School, who actually wrote the city council resolution passed last year, says he's been impressed by the local and national impacts.

"The national response has been amazing in the sense of how many communities and individuals have taken this up," Remle said, reporting that people in towns and cities across the country reached out to him asking for advice on establishing Indigenous Peoples Days in their own city.

Earlier this month, Portland and Albuquerque voted to observe the day starting this year, and Olympia did the same in August. More than **20 other cities** have established an Indigenous Peoples' Day as well, Remle said.

"One response that has just been phenomenal is the sense of empowerment — communities are saying across the country — Native communities specifically that, 'Man, we can do this here.'"

Today's holiday [will be celebrated](#) starting at 10 a.m. with a **march in downtown Seattle**, a talk by Ojibwe activist and environmentalist Winona LaDuke, and cultural performances at the Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center in Discovery Park. Hundreds of demonstrators also [gathered near Pike Place Market](#) on Sunday to call for an end to federal celebration of Christopher Columbus.

Remle, who is Lakota, says Indigenous Peoples' Day has brought a Native perspective to the city that was missing previously.

"I've been in Seattle since the late 90s, and I've never really seen Native-specific issues be even talked about from City Council or the Mayor's office or anybody..." Remle said. "So I think it was kind of like a door being opened and bringing in the Native community, Native voice, Native perspective on a whole host of issues."

During the protests over Shell's Arctic oil rig, for example, City Council members were **suddenly paying attention to issues important to Native people.**

"You saw Council members getting in traditional canoes, Kshama [Sawant] and some others, with Duwamish or with Lummi nation, getting in their canoes and understanding it isn't just this rig parked in Seattle, but this is a drilling rig docked in Seattle on the traditional fishing grounds of the Duwamish people, and it's being sent to the traditional fishing grounds of Alaska Native villages."



Native Activists in a canoe follow Shell's Polar Pioneer drilling rig out of Elliott Bay in June. (Photo by Alex Garland)

The resolution passed by the School Board last year also meant a meaningful curriculum change for Seattle Public Schools. The [new curriculum](#), called "Since Time Immemorial," was developed by Denny Hurtado and Tulalip Senator John McCoy, and [incorporates Native history and culture into](#) instruction. As of May of this year it's now mandated statewide.

Sarah Sense-Wilson (Oglala, Sioux), is the chair of the [Urban Native Education Alliance](#). She says she still has concerns about how the curriculum will be integrated into Seattle classrooms, and whether teachers have the social knowledge to do so effectively. She still thinks Seattle Public Schools could better serve Native students, who face significant challenges in the education system.

Sense-Wilson says the real progress achieved as a result of Indigenous Peoples Day may be slow.

“It’s complex, it’s difficult, and **it’s not anything that’s going to be switched on overnight** — it’s going to take time to develop,” she says, arguing there are larger issues to worry about than celebrations, though she adds that she doesn’t want to diminish the work of activists like Remle who were instrumental in creating the day.

“I have some opinions about the huge celebration and resources that go into celebrating when our kids are struggling and suffering, dropping out and ending up in the legal system or on the street or in foster care,” Sense-Wilson said. “We have bigger, greater issues that we have to contend with on a daily basis, not once a year.”

Remle seems to agree. He says the adoption of Indigenous Peoples day is only the first step toward raising consciousness about Native issues. This year he is proposing [a new resolution](#) calling on Seattle to acknowledge the trauma caused by boarding schools for Native children in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

If Seattle City Council votes yes on the resolution (scheduled for the docket at 2 p.m. Monday) it will become the first non-tribal government in the United States to acknowledge the boarding school era, when around 100,000 Native children were sent to boarding schools and forced to abandon their culture and assimilate to white society. Many faced psychological abuse, torture and rape. Remle points out that the boarding schools fulfill the Geneva Convention’s definition of genocide.

He says the resolution isn’t just about acknowledging a historical wrong, but also about recognizing the roots of many of the problems facing the Native community today, including **homelessness and high drop-out rates**.

As he sees it, Indigenous Peoples Day is one step forward, but more needs to be done.

“Colonization never ended, and that’s a narrative that we must continually put out there,” Remle said. “So efforts around Columbus Day, or Indigenous Peoples’ Day, around boarding schools, these are just **ongoing efforts in the larger 500 years of indigenous resistance**.”

Those efforts haven’t been welcomed by everyone in Seattle.

Last year Italian American activists [criticized the adoption of Indigenous Peoples Day](#), calling it an insult to their cultural community.

Martin Nigrelle, president of the board of directors of Casa Italiana, a Seattle Italian culture organization, said the **Italian community has no plans to protest the celebrations this year**. But he says they’ve become aware of the need to make their culture more visible in the city.

“Columbus day didn’t represent the celebration of one man, it just has his name on it,” he said. “It was about the celebration of all things Italian and all the Italian heritage that we have.”

Though Italians have a long history in Seattle, Nigrelle says many are assimilated into mainstream white society. For some, the introduction of Indigenous Peoples Day to the city changed this.

“To a certain degree it galvanized some of the Italian American community to come back together and realize that if our culture isn’t recognized then that’s probably on us to take better efforts to make sure that we’re still present in the community.”

“I think that what we’re concerned with now is about how our culture can be recognized and celebrated.” he said. “Not about choosing a lightning rod figure, not about taking actions that would pit one group against another. Seattle’s a city that’s big enough to celebrate two cultures at once.”

Direct Link: <http://www.seattleglobalist.com/2015/10/11/seattle-indigenous-peoples-day-native-activists-matt-remle-columbus-day/42348>

Farrakhan on Columbus Day: ‘No Indigenous People’ Want to Celebrate ‘The Wicked One’ Who ‘Dislodged Them’

By [Melanie Hunter](#) | October 12, 2015 | 11:38 AM EDT



Nation of Islam leader Minister Louis Farrakhan (AP Photo)

(CNSNews.com) – Nation of Islam leader Minister Louis Farrakhan called Christopher Columbus “the wicked one” during an event on Saturday marking the 20th anniversary of the Million Man March.

“Haiti and the Dominican Republic used to be called Hispanolia, and it’s the first place that the wicked one, Columbus, set his feet. Tomorrow, they say it’s his birthday. I think it’s tomorrow, or the day after, Monday,” said Farrakhan.

The [Anti-Defamation League](#) has been an outspoken opponent of Farrakhan for anti-semitic remarks he has made.

“For over 30 years, Louis Farrakhan, leader of the [Nation of Islam \(NOI\)](#), has marked himself as a notable figure on the extremist scene, verbally attacking Jews, white people and the LGBT community,” ADL noted in a March 20, 2015 report on its website, titled “Farrakhan in His Own Words.”

“In recent years, Farrakhan has embarked on a wide-ranging campaign specifically targeting the Jewish community, which has featured some of the most hateful speeches of Farrakhan’s career as head of the NOI,” stated the ADL report. “Farrakhan has alleged that the Jewish people were responsible for the slave trade and that they conspire to control the government, the media, Hollywood, and various Black individuals and organizations.

“He also frequently denies that Jews have a legitimate claim to their religion and to the land of Israel claiming that Judaism is nothing more than a ‘deceptive lie’ and a ‘theological error’ promoted by Jews to further their supposed control over America’s government and economy,” the report stated.

In a speech Saturday, Farrakhan criticized Christopher Columbus, two days before the nation celebrates Columbus’s birthday, saying, “but no indigenous people want to celebrate a man who came and dislodged them, a man who came seeking a new route to India and ended up in America.”

“And when they saw the original people that they saw, well they must be Indian, ‘cause we white folk don’t make mistakes like that. But they’re not just Indians, nor are we African-Americans. We were here before a continent named Africa was named,” Farrakhan said.

“We were certainly here before Americus Vesputius, and this part of the world was named after him. So we don’t diminish ourselves by naming ourselves after Johnny Come Latelys. We are the aboriginal people of our planet, and before there was a planet, we were here with God in the beginning,” Farrakhan added.

Direct Link: <http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/melanie-hunter/farrakhan-columbus-day-no-indigenous-people-want-celebrate-wicked-one>

**Houska: California Ousts Native American Slur –
Happy Indigenous Peoples Day, Indeed**

[Tara Houska](#)

10/12/15

In Washington D.C., the celebration of another Washington team touchdown reverberated through the streets. The long-embattled football franchise was tied up with the Falcons, and hopeful fans were going nuts.

Across Indian Country, a celebration of a different kind happened. Native Americans throughout the U.S. hailed the [signing of Assembly Bill 30](#) into law in California. The law mandates the four remaining schools that share the Washington team moniker to change their name. It was another victory in a string of [name changes](#) at public schools.

After [testimony](#) from Native American youth, tribal leaders, and psychologists, California became the first state to enact a statewide policy banning the use of a dictionary-defined slur. [Study](#) after [study](#) has concluded that Native American mascots have a negative effect on Native children's self-esteem and further ingrain racial stereotypes.

Just a few weeks ago, a fellow Native American attorney addressed the Native American Bar Association of D.C. about an incident at his child's Maryland school. Despite the findings of multiple legal bodies that the term disparages Native Americans and a self-imposed ban on Native mascots in Montgomery County, the principal wore a Washington team jersey to school.

Calls to the institution went unanswered, concerns about a learning environment free of racial caricatures were dismissed.

But society is making some progress. Though disparate police brutality against people of color and institutional racism persist, the United States has started opening its eyes. Over the summer we saw [several states](#) lower Confederate flags and acknowledge the dehumanizing effects of imagery tied to racism.

Over the calls of "proud tradition" and "we don't mean it that way", the symbol of the slave-owning South came down. Those arguments [sound familiar](#), don't they?

Imagine how a business would fare in Washington, D.C., the so-called "[Chocolate City](#)," if it flew a Confederate flag. The genocidal policies of the past resulted in Native Americans being the smallest racial minority. Yet, we still persist. We are here. Our representation matters.

Today, I will walk past businesses proudly displaying a Washington team flag, past monuments celebrating Christopher Columbus. I will be reminded of the place of indigenous peoples in America's narrative, that the well-being of our children somehow matters less than others. That destruction of tribal nations results in commemoration with a federal holiday or being placed on the twenty-dollar bill.

As America honors a man who enacted genocide and Washington, D.C. mourns another football loss, this Native American will continue waiting for the day that we are shown the same respect as everyone else.

Happy Indigenous Peoples Day.

Tara Houska (Couchiching First Nation) is a tribal rights attorney in Washington, D.C., a founding member of NotYourMascots.org, and an all-around rabble rouser. Follow her: [@zhaabowekwe](#).

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/10/12/houska-california-ousts-native-american-slur-happy-indigenous-peoples-day-indeed-162055>

This Navajo Woman Is Planning the First Native American Birthing Center in the Country

Native American women have limited options when it comes to reproductive health care. Nicolle Gonzales wants to change that.

By [Prachi Gupta](#)



Nicolle Gonzales

Nicolle Gonzales is one of just 14 Native American women in this country who are certified nurse midwives, putting her in a unique position to offer much-needed reproductive health care to Native American women that is also attuned to their traditional beliefs and customs. Recently featured in [Colorlines](#), the 35-year-old Dine (Navajo) woman cofounded a nonprofit organization called the [Changing Woman Initiative](#) and is poised to become the founder of the first Native American birthing center in America (the Colorlines article names two women as co-founders, but Gonzales says her former partner has since stepped down due to extenuating personal circumstances).

America's indigenous population has been hurt by what the [White House](#) calls "a history of deeply troubling and destructive federal policies", and they are now one of the most marginalized people in this country. They live in extreme poverty where rates of [suicide](#) and [sexual assault](#) are more than double the national average, and where the barriers to health care and education are high. Health care for federally recognized tribes are covered by the government-run Indian Health Services, an agency that has been criticized by lawmakers as being [mismanaged](#) and [underfunded](#), and one that, Gonzales says, is often unable to communicate with indigenous people due to cultural barriers and misunderstandings.

Gonzales's birthing center is currently still in its [planning and fundraising phases](#), but she hopes to open it in northern New Mexico within two to three years. She spoke to [Cosmopolitan.com](#) about the undertaking.

Why did you decide to embark on this project?

I went to school at the University of New Mexico to get my bachelor's in nursing, and then I worked for about five years as a labor and delivery nurse and med-surg nurse, and then I chose to return back to school to be a midwife. Really, my choice to be a midwife was kind of like my own call to action. My husband is from the San Ildefonso Pueblo, and while we lived there, we definitely saw firsthand the impact of alcohol and abuse, and suicide in the community.

When I worked at the Indian Health Services hospital in Santa Fe, I did experience situations where Native women, I didn't feel, were treated very well by the nursing staff or by providers. When I went to midwifery school, I was surrounded by these very affluent Anglo-women. There I was this little — as I see myself — a "res-girl" going to college to become a midwife with no other expectation but to graduate, and to go to back to my community and provide midwifery services. After listening to everyone talk about this midwifery movement in the United States, it was like, "What about Native American women? What about midwives and our community? And why are we only delivering in hospitals and not thinking about birth in this very holistic way that women like Ina May Gaskin have talked about?"

I really started to do a lot of research, [went] home and talked to my family and my elders about birth and what it used to look like before Indian Health Services came in the 1950s. This very rich history revealed itself to me that we've had so many cultural impacts that we as Native women have been purposefully separated from our traditional knowledge about our bodies and about motherhood and about birthing in a very culturally significant way to ourselves. When I finished midwifery school, I had the intention of starting a birth center because that hadn't been done yet. I really wanted a whole center focused on Native American health and women. The other piece is, there are some healing practices and language and songs that tribes are very protective of. If we were to share it with women who are not native or from the tribe, that's a no-no. If we created this very culturally safe space such as a birth center, that wouldn't be an issue.

If you think about a birth center, it's this very well-organized wellness framework that we're trying to implement to change the health disparities and the issues within our Native communities right now. For Native women, it's pre-term delivery, low birth-weight babies, accessing prenatal care in the first trimester, postpartum depression.



Nicolle Gonzales

How is Native American midwifery different from the mainstream midwifery movement? Because of Indian House Services' implementation in the 1950s, basically you have this very dominant culture coming into our reservation and telling us what our health status is — telling us that we need to eat this way, that we need to live this way, that we need to look this way, we need to talk this way. Though there are some positive changes that have happened, meaning that our maternal death rate is lower than it was in the 1950s, it's still not perfect. We still have higher rates of postpartum depression and women not accessing prenatal care.

The reason for that is because we are not incorporating our traditional teachings and beliefs into our wellness frameworks. If you think about dominant medicine, it's very like disease-process. We manage the disease. You come in, we take your blood pressure, there's no talk of spirituality. In our wellness framework from an indigenous perspective, our spirituality and our mental state are actually a part of our wellness. So if one is impacted, if one is a little bit off, then our body follows. So basically, it can manifest into disease in our body.

There's things that my elders told me that research is just now catching up with today. An example of that would be, pregnant women in our early first trimester of pregnancy, our elders tell us that we're not supposed to fight with our husbands, we're not supposed to be scared or be angry because those feelings go to the baby. That's the spiritual kind of thinking, right? Modern medicine is caught up today and talks about how high levels of stress and cortisol in early pregnancy can actually change and alter cortisol levels in your

fetus, and therefore at your delivery, your baby is not able to calm itself like they normally would if you weren't altered in that early state. It's called epigenetics.

The other thing is, obviously the pharmacological aspects of medicine is huge, right? There's a pill for everything. Whereas the Native Americans, we tend to not go that route first. If there's a medical issue or something wrong with us, we tend to go to Native traditional healers first and then, maybe, we would go to our doctor or midwife. So, if we incorporate a health care system where those two things exist in the same place, you're kind of taking care of all of the needs and not just one piece of it.

Implications for Health Professionals

- Community based wellness models based on cultural teachings and belief systems has potential to impact health outcomes in a positive way.
- Building positive and trusting relationships with communities
- Engaging the community and its members to be active role models in their own health.
- Encourages bridging the gaps between Native American/Indigenous traditional models of wellness and modern models of health.
- Strengthens maternal child health and family bonds by way of story telling and sharing of generational knowledge.

A slide from Gonzalez's presentation to a Native American community on the importance of incorporating cultural knowledge into women's health care.

What are the specific services that the center will offer? Definitely diabetes education, sexual health for youth and women adults, traditional parenting classes, nutritional education, social services, counseling, those sort of things. Of course, prenatal care or women care. Again, when we do the strategic planning with the community, they'll say, "You know, we really need this." If they decide they need to have a laundromat next to it, then we'll build a laundromat next to it.

What about abortion? We probably won't do abortion services. We have pretty strong beliefs about pregnancy and birth in our tribe. As a midwife, personally, I support it and I would send women where they need to go for it, but I wouldn't perform them myself and it wouldn't be done at the birth center.

So what kind of support have you seen, and how are you funding this project? I've definitely reached out to organizations like [Tewa Women United](#), which have been in this community for years. They do more of, like, reproductive justice. They have a doula program. I'm trying to string together a network of Native organizations so that way we

support each other, but we also create networks to kind of share information and help our communities through the work that we're doing. And because this is such a new thing, I'm really still in that process of educating the communities about what their options are about midwifery, about birthing outside the hospital. My hope is when I get the strategic planning guide done after our gatherings here in the upcoming year, that I will go up to the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council meeting and introduce information and see what kind of support we can get from the tribes. But the women so far are very supportive.

I grew up in a very wonderful family, but I also, unfortunately like a lot of Native women, experienced sexual abuse in my childhood and I went through a period of depression as I was a teenager. As a midwife, I feel like I see women all the time who've been sexually abused or have been in very abusive relationships. I feel like when I visit with them one-on-one in midwifery, there's this connection because I do understand where they're coming from. Just because I'm doing all these wonderful things doesn't mean I had this very wholesome upbringing because I didn't.



Navajo reservation

Can you tell me a little bit more about how you think midwifery helps women connect with each other and deal with sexual abuse? Well, I think when you have been sexually abused, there's this feeling of "You're dirty. Something is wrong with you." You don't want to tell people. Or you're afraid that the person who abused you is going to get in trouble. As women's health providers, we are the first ones that they tell if something happens. You know, if they're pregnant from a rape or if they're coming in for a physical or STD testing because they've been raped.

Then, as far as the emotional stability piece, me having that understanding of how you feel when you've gone through something like that, I feel like I'm a lot more attuned to meeting them on the same level. Rather than being like, "I'm up here and you're down there and I'm going to tell you what I need you to do," there's this automatic relationship and bond to try and address the issue, and I think that's where midwifery makes that impact. And actually, because midwives have a nursing background, we do have the ability to do special training to do rape collection of information, physicals.

Why do you think it's taken so long for something like this to come together? I think it hasn't happened yet because there isn't a lot of Native American midwives. There's only 14 of us who are midwives. I probably only know about five or six of them. I think that there's this idea that Indian Health Services is going to take care of everything, therefore we can't expand or go beyond what they're offering right now. I think starting a birth center is very daunting idea. Finally it came to me that I can't do it by myself, and I reached out to my community for their support and guidance. I feel like this birth center is a really good example of tribal sovereignty, that we as a people can take care of ourselves, that we can rise above, and that we can develop a wellness framework and a birth center to take care of our women.

Direct Link: <http://www.cosmopolitan.com/politics/news/a47518/americas-first-native-american-birthing-center/>

Denver City Council unanimously recognizes Indigenous Peoples' Day

Posted 8:41 pm, October 11, 2015, by [CNN Wire](#) and [Carly Moore](#)



Christopher Columbus (Photo: Thinkstock)

DENVER — The Denver City Council on Monday unanimously voted in favor of the proclamation in recognizing Oct. 12 as Indigenous Peoples' Day. It's the first time the day was formally recognized by Denver. The proclamation was brought forth by Councilman Paul Lopez.

“Far too often the contributions of indigenous peoples go unrecognized in our history and textbooks, misrepresenting how much of the United States was settled, including Denver,” said Lopez, who worked closely with the Denver American Indian Commission on writing the proclamation.

Throughout the continent, the culture and contributions of indigenous people are still felt, especially close to the Denver metro area.

The seasonal encampments of the Arapaho and Cheyenne people were along the banks of what is now Cherry Creek and the South Platte River, Lopez said.

“It is unfortunate that many people do not know this history, and it is important that we recognize the entire history of our nation,” Lopez said. “This proclamation is intended to bring attention to and celebrate the contributions of indigenous people to our great city and country.”

What is Indigenous People’s Day?

On Monday, instead of celebrating Christopher Columbus, some cities and schools are honoring the people he encountered in the New World and their descendants.

More jurisdictions are recognizing the second Monday in October as Indigenous People’s Day, building on efforts to shift the holiday’s focus away from the Italian explorer.

From a practical standpoint, regardless of what the day is called there’s no guarantee you have it off from work unless you’re a federal employee. Columbus Day is one of America’s most inconsistently celebrated holidays, with 23 states and Washington recognizing it as a paid holiday for state workers. In the private sector, it depends on the company.

The shift is part of broader attempts to clarify Columbus’ role in American history and connect indigenous culture to something other than sports teams, Halloween costumes and pop culture appropriation.

How it started

Berkeley, Calif., is thought to be the first city to adopt Indigenous People’s Day, in 1992, building on global efforts to correct the misperception that Columbus was the first explorer to reach the banks of the New World. A 1994 United Nations General Assembly resolution established International Day of the World’s Indigenous People on Aug. 9.

South Dakota has celebrated Native American Day instead of Columbus Day since 1990. In 2014, Seattle and Minneapolis became the first major American cities to approve a measure by city council vote recognizing Indigenous People’s Day.

Minneapolis still has Columbus Day; Washington is among the states that don't recognize Columbus Day as a legal holiday. Schools in Portland, Ore., and Seattle followed its lead.

This year, Multnomah County, Ore.; St. Paul, Minn.; Olympia, Wash.; Traverse City, Mich.; Albuquerque; and Sandoval County, N.M., as well as Denver are among the latest jurisdictions to decide to mark Indigenous People's Day on the same day as Columbus Day.

The event does not replace Columbus Day in places where Columbus Day is a state holiday. Where it's not a state holiday, there's nothing preventing a mayor or board of county commissioners from adopting a proclamation that says Indigenous People's Day is the holiday du jour — which is what happened in Portland.

"Reclaiming the second Monday in October as Indigenous People's Day makes a powerful statement," Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury said in a statement. "It says, 'We are no longer going to celebrate a time of genocide, but instead we will honor the land we live on and the people who have been here since the beginning.'"

How the holiday will be celebrated varies among jurisdictions. Either way, supporters of Indigenous Peoples' Day are satisfied with the symbolic nature of the occasion. For them, it's an acknowledgment not only of Native American history but also modern indigenous culture.

"This (resolution) not only represents that we have been here for 10,000 years or longer ... more importantly it recognizes that we are still here and that we are alive," Arlene Kashata, a Traverse City resident and member of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, told the Traverse City Record-Eagle when the her town voted to recognize Indigenous Peoples' Day. "That we are a culture that is giving and contributing to this community."

Why it matters

A rural community in Erie County, N.Y., outside Buffalo, has big plans.

The town of Newstead, home to part of the Tonawanda Indian Reservation, voted in May to recognize Indigenous People's Day on Columbus Day. Neighboring Akron and Lewiston followed their lead, along with the Akron Board of Education.

The schedule for the first Indigenous Peoples' Day includes traditional song and dance, an art show, food and speeches, according to The Buffalo News.

The decision came a few months after Akron High School's boys lacrosse team took a stand by refusing to play rival Lancaster because of its team name, the same one the Washington NFL team uses. Two more school districts followed their example, prompting Lancaster to drop the name after using it for decades.

On the Akron team, 16 of its 21 players are members of the Tonawanda Seneca Nation, and it mattered to them. Not to mention the fact that lacrosse originated among Native Americans.

“If you’ve never met a Native American, you might not understand what they find offensive and why they find it offensive. And then you know people, and you start to understand,” Akron lacrosse coach Bryan Bellis told USA Today.

“To me, the bottom line is this is public education. And if people find it offensive — even if the people who use it don’t think it is or don’t mean it to be — the public is paying for public education, and no one should be put in an uncomfortable position. My kids were uncomfortable.”

What’s the impact?

President Benjamin Harrison issued the first proclamation encouraging Americans to celebrate Columbus Day in 1892 — the 400th anniversary of Columbus’ landing in the Bahamas in 1492 — by taking the day off work to pay homage to the explorer and show “their appreciation of the great achievements of the four completed centuries of American life.”

President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued a proclamation making it a federal holiday in 1937, after intense lobbying by the Knights of Columbus, a fraternal benefit organization of Italians and Roman Catholics. President Richard Nixon established the modern holiday on the second Monday in October in 1971.

In many cities, Columbus Day is a celebration of Italian-American heritage, not just Columbus, so it’s no surprise that Italian-Americans are among the most vocal opponents of the shifting focus.

Parades are still planned this year in New York and San Francisco, home of the country’s biggest Columbus Day celebrations. New York is one of the states where Columbus Day is a paid holiday. In Erie County, the Federation of Italian-American Societies in Western New York will still host the annual Columbus Day parade in Buffalo,

“This, for us, will always be Columbus Day,” President Peter LoJacono told the Buffalo News in June. “It’s a day we have always celebrated. We will continue to do so.”

Direct Link: <http://kdvr.com/2015/10/11/instead-of-columbus-day-some-celebrate-indigenous-peoples-day/>

Mexico Performs First Mass in Indigenous Nahuatl Language

By The Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — Oct 13, 2015, 9:28 PM ET

The first Mass conducted in Mexico's most prominent indigenous language has been held in the country's most important church.

Roman Catholic Bishop Felipe Arizmendi said during his homily Tuesday at the Basilica of Guadalupe in Mexico City that rather than accept and respect the culture of the country's original peoples, they have been scorned.

He pointed out that Nahuatl was the language of Juan Diego, the first indigenous saint, who Catholic tradition says saw the Virgin of Guadalupe nearly 500 years ago. [Pope John Paul II](#) canonized Juan Diego in the same basilica in 2002.

Arizmendi spoke in Spanish and his words were translated to Nahuatl.

He told the congregants that God wants to speak to them in their own language.

Direct Link: <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/mexico-performs-mass-indigenous-nahuatl-language-34456202>

Students Want Schools To Reconsider Native American Mascots, Obama Administration Says

"It's still a slap in the face every time."

[Travis Waldron](#) Sports Reporter, The Huffington Post
Posted: 10/15/2015 12:10 PM EDT | Edited: 4 hours ago



Brennan Linsley/AP Loveland High School in Colorado still uses "Indians" as its mascot. A new report from the U.S. Department of Education highlights how students are affected by seeing such mascots.

School districts that use Native American nicknames and imagery should analyze whether they are causing harm to their students and consider changing the mascots, native students told the U.S. Department of Education during community meetings last year.

Students' and educators' concerns about such mascots were summarized in a report the Education Department released Thursday. The report resulted from a first-of-its-kind listening tour that took place last year, during which department officials visited Native American communities in seven states to hear about the greatest issues affecting education.

"States and local school districts should consider the historical significance and context of Native school mascots and imagery in determining whether they have a negative effect on students, including Native American students," the report recommends.

"[The Education Department's Office for Civil Rights], states, and school districts should work with schools to develop and implement actions to change potentially harmful imagery and symbolism," it continues.

The recommendation is part of the School Environment Listening Sessions Report, a product of the Office for Civil Rights and the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education. The Obama administration launched the initiative, which is housed in the Education Department, in 2011 as part of a broader effort to improve Native American education.

WHIAIANE Executive Director William Mendoza announced the report's recommendations Thursday morning at the National Indian Education Association's annual convention in Portland, Oregon.

During the listening sessions, which the department said attracted more than 1,000 attendees, WHIAIANE officials heard extensive testimony from students that "illustrated how stereotypical imagery and symbolism harm all students, especially [American Indian and Alaska Native] students, by interfering with self-identity, perpetuating negative stereotypes, encouraging bullying and teasing, and creating unhealthy learning environments," the report says.

"We had deep conversations on the appropriateness of living, breathing human beings being depicted as mascots," Mendoza told The Huffington Post on Thursday.

More than 2,400 American schools still use Native American mascots, according to the report. The listening tour, Mendoza said, was meant to give Native American students a voice in how they are depicted.

"In high school, my mascot was the 'Redskins' and I had to watch my classmates make posters saying we are going to 'skin' our sports opponents. The other teams would make posters that said they are going to send us home on a 'trail of tears,'" one Native American college student told WHIAIANE officials at a listening session in Oklahoma City.

"It's still a slap in the face every time," she added. "I thought I had moved on, but it still hurts every time."

The initiative also considered official statements from tribes and organizations that oppose the use of Native American imagery in sports, and notes the long-held positions of the [American Psychological Association](#) and [American Sociological Association](#), which passed resolutions calling for the retirement of native mascots in 2005 and 2007, respectively.

The mascots don't just affect Native American students, Mendoza said. They also have an "understated impact" on how non-natives view Native Americans, and give them a "false experience in connecting" to those communities and cultures.

WHIAIANE said the recommendations "will guide its future work and goals."

Native American tribes, organizations and activists have combatted the use of their imagery in schools for decades, and the movement has regained steam in recent years thanks to the high-profile controversy around the name of the Washington, D.C., NFL team.

Some states and school districts have already begun taking their own actions. California Gov. Jerry Brown (D) this week signed a law that [bans schools from using "Redskins"](#) as a mascot and will force four high schools in the state to find new names for their athletic teams.

Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper (D) last week [formed an executive committee](#) to review the use of Native American mascots in his state, and Oregon is in the process of [enacting a law](#) passed in 2012 that would force schools to change Native American mascots if they do not have tribal approval. In April, Pennsylvania's state civil rights agency ruled that a high school's "Redskins" mascot was "[racially derogatory](#)," though it did not force the school to drop it.

At least eight schools [have changed their mascots](#) in recent years because they used Native American imagery, though Daniel Snyder, the owner of Washington's NFL franchise, has said he will "NEVER" change his team's name.

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, who plans to step down at the end of the year, has used social media to [praise individual schools](#) that have moved away from the names. This week, Duncan [thanked Brown](#) for signing the California law.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/education-department-change-native-american-mascots_561eba16e4b050c6c4a41b5a

Downtown Olympia mural honors Native American activist Leonard Peltier

Local artist Ira Coyne painted the mural near the artesian well in downtown Olympia.

October 14, 2015

Leonard Peltier was convicted of killing two FBI agents in a shootout 40 years ago.

A plaque next to the mural encourages people to call the White House and demand clemency for Peltier.



This mural near the artesian well in downtown Olympia is based on “Stalking,” a painting by Leonard Peltier. Peter Haley Staff photographer

By Andy Hobbs

Staff writer

As Olympia celebrated its first Indigenous Peoples Day this week, a local artist unveiled a tribute to a Native American activist who some say was wrongly convicted of murder.

A mural based on an original painting called “Stalking” by Leonard Peltier now adorns a wall near the artesian well in downtown Olympia. The colorful piece features a pink lion slinking through the grass.

Peltier, 71, has drawn international attention with his case. In 1977, he was convicted of killing two FBI agents in a shootout two years earlier at the Pine Ridge Indian

Reservation in South Dakota, and he received two life sentences. He is incarcerated at the federal penitentiary in Coleman, Florida.

Human rights organizations including [Amnesty International](#) have called for Peltier's release, citing concerns about insufficient evidence and the fairness of his prosecution.

Olympia artist Ira Coyne got the idea for the mural after Peltier's oldest son, Chauncey Peltier, was featured on a local weekly radio show called "Make No Bones About It" on KAOS-89.3 FM. The show is hosted by Brian Frisina, also known as Raven Redbone, and focuses on Native American issues.

After that show, Coyne said he went online to find artwork by Leonard Peltier — whom he had always known as a humanitarian — and was "blown away."

"I had no idea he was such a talented artist," Coyne said of Peltier, adding that the pink lion painting "just really drew me in."

Coyne eventually connected with Chauncey Peltier, and the two spent last weekend prepping a wall on the south side of the Cryptatropa Bar on Fourth Avenue East. The mural faces a parking lot where the public can access the historic artesian well.

The mural is intended to make the artesian well a better place, but also to educate the public, Coyne said. A plaque next to the mural encourages people to call the White House and demand clemency for Peltier. It also lists websites with more information.

"A lot of people don't know who Leonard is because he's been locked up for so long," said Coyne, who donated the paint and his time for the mural. "I put the information there so people could educate themselves about it and learn who he is."

Chauncey Peltier told The Olympian that the painting "just turned out beautiful." The Oregon resident said that support for his father has always been strong in the Olympia area, particularly at The Evergreen State College.

Peltier said his family will continue to pursue clemency, although they fear that Leonard Peltier may not live long enough to see it, especially if clemency isn't granted [before President Obama leaves office](#).

"My father has been wrongly convicted of those charges, and 40 years of injustice is way too long," he said. "This is pretty emotional for the family."

Read more here: <http://www.theolympian.com/news/local/article39229542.html#storylink=cpy>

Columbus Day now 'Indigenous People's Day' in Bridgeport schools

By Linda Conner Lambeck

Updated 1:09 am, Thursday, October 15, 2015



City officials confirmed Monday that a statue of Christopher Columbus in Bridgeport's Seaside Park has been vandalized with black paint on the sculpture's face. Elaine Ficarra, aide to Mayor Bill Finch said

BRIDGEPORT — Columbus Day is no more in city schools.

In a swift, unanimous vote Tuesday evening, the city school board voted to rename the holiday "Indigenous People's Day."

Students and staff will still get their long weekend. But the day, celebrated on the second Monday in October, will no longer pay homage to the explorer many say contributed to the genocide of native Americans.

The proposal was made by [Kate Rivera](#), the board's newest and temporary board member, who since coming on the panel in August has also caused the district to create a special education hotline to report problems, and to form a special education parent group.

More Information

Cushion against snow days

Local school districts that have eliminated the Columbus Day holiday:

Milford

Stratford

Fairfield

Monroe

Rivera said students should be taught true history, not the falsehood that Columbus was a hero.

"It's just a matter of being accurate," Rivera said. "Columbus didn't find anything. There were already people here."

Rivera said the change is in recognition of the native American people who were here before Columbus arrived in 1492.

Board member [Sauda Baraka](#) said changing the name is the best way for the district to celebrate the history of the people who were here first.

"I do agree ... that the history needs to be taught correctly," Baraka said. "Our children need to understand exactly what happened."

Interim Schools Superintendent [Fran Rabinowitz](#) said the change took her by surprise.

"I would like to research how we will implement the indigenous people holiday," she said.

The district is not the only one to take such action. The entire state of Alaska voted Monday to rename the holiday Indigenous Peoples Day. A Washington Post article this week cited at least nine cities that have renamed the day, including Albuquerque, N.M., Seattle and Minneapolis.

In Connecticut, a number of school districts — among them Milford, Stratford, Fairfield and Monroe — have stopped taking the day off, not as a political statement but as a way to give themselves a cushion against snow days.

Columbus Day has been around since at least 1792, some three centuries after the Italian explorer sailed the ocean blue to prove the world was not flat — or so we were told.

Then, as now, the holiday has been cloaked primarily in a celebration of Italian-American heritage.

It became a federal holiday in 1937, first on Oct. 12, and eventually on the second Monday of October.

This past Sunday, Bridgeport celebrated its 108th annual Columbus Day Parade, said to be the oldest continuous parade in the state.

Former state Rep. [Chris Caruso](#), the treasurer of the [Council of Italian-American Societies of Greater Bridgeport](#), which sponsors the parade, said he had no comment on the board's decision or on Columbus.

“It's not changing Columbus Day itself, just what the school system calls it,” Caruso said. “Plans are already well underway for Bridgeport's 109th Columbus Day parade.”

Assistant Police Chief [James Nardozi](#), grand marshal of the parade, had no comment on the school board action, either, said police spokesman [Kevin Coughlin](#).

Bridgeport is also home to a [Columbus School](#). No mention of that was made by the school board on Tuesday.

The school board can change the name of schools, but not without input from the school community.

Rivera, for the record, said she would love to see the name of the school changed.

Direct Link: <http://www.ctpost.com/news/article/Columbus-Day-becomes-Indigenous-People-Day-in-6570416.php>

Playing Dirty: Dartmouth Group Mocks Indigenous Day with 'Native Thong'

[Jacqueline Keeler](#)

10/15/15

Once again Dartmouth College, home of the Ivy League's largest Native American student program was in the news in a negative light. After Indigenous Peoples' Day was celebrated on campus—and while 56 prospective Native students from around the country were still visiting the college—fliers were put up all over campus urging Native students to celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day by purchasing 'Dartmouth Indian' products from a CafePress store called Occupy Parkhurst. This store featured whiskey flasks and even a woman's thong with a 'Dartmouth Indian' on it. Dartmouth discontinued the use of this mascot in response to Native American students demands four decades ago.



This flier appeared around the Dartmouth campus Monday night.

Although, Dartmouth College president Philip J. Hanlon has been silent during all of the recent bad press regarding the college's relations with Native Americans, the Provost of the college Carolyn Dever denounced the actions of the anonymous students who did this as "cowardly and disrespectful" in an email to the student body.

She quoted former President Wright who said, "Since the Dartmouth Board of Trustees decided in the 1970s not to use the Indian symbol, the College's position on this has never wavered. Nor will it. American Indians are a rich part of Dartmouth's heritage and

a strong contributing part of our community. Collectively and as individuals they deserve our respect and our admiration.”

From: Provost Carolyn Dever and Dean of the College Rebecca Biron
[Provost@Dartmouth.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2015 9:10 PM
Subject: Message to the Community

To the College community,

We learned this morning that Dartmouth's campus was littered with flyers promoting an online business that sells apparel featuring an Indian symbol that Dartmouth stopped using long ago. This activity, which coincided with yesterday's Columbus Day and Indigenous People's Day observance, disrespects our community members of Native heritage. That contradicts our institutional commitment to supporting and maintaining an inclusive and respectful educational community.

As former President James Wright noted in the fall of 2006, "Since the Dartmouth Board of Trustees decided in the 1970s not to use the Indian symbol, the College's position on this has never wavered. Nor will it. American Indians are a rich part of Dartmouth's heritage and a strong contributing part of our community. Collectively and as individuals they deserve our respect and our admiration." We couldn't agree more.

The College Principle of Community, endorsed by the Board of Trustees in 1980, states: "The life and work of a Dartmouth student should be based on integrity, responsibility, and consideration. In all activities each student is expected to be sensitive to and respectful of the rights and interests of others and to be personally honest. He or she should be appreciative of the diversity of the community as providing an opportunity for learning and moral growth."

The anonymous distribution of these flyers at this time and place was cowardly and disrespectful. It runs counter to our principles and our institutional mission. We call on all members of our community to behave in ways that reflect our highest and best values, and that promote a positive living and learning environment for all.

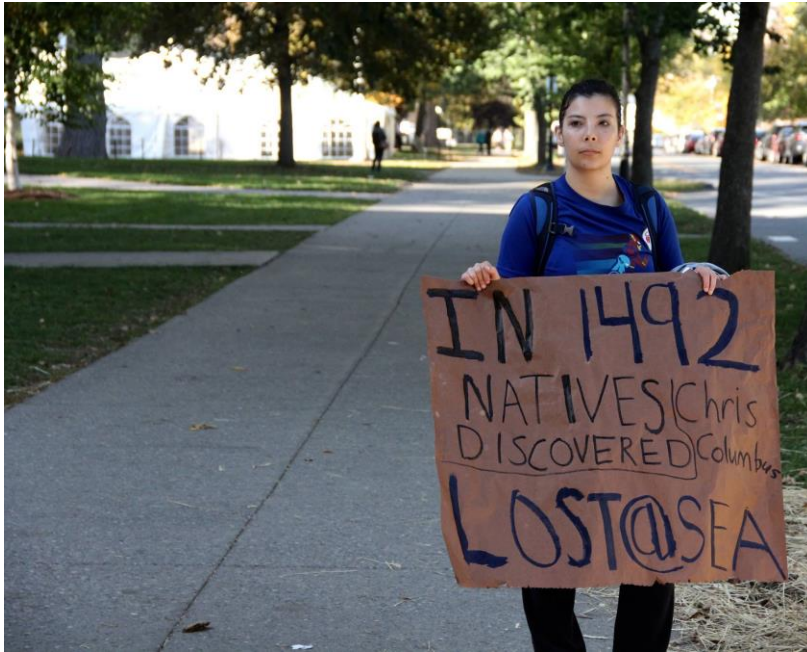
Carolyn Dever
Provost

Rebecca Biron
Dean of the College

Dartblog posted this letter from Carolyn Dever.

Dartmouth was originally founded as a college with a charter from King George III to educate Indian youth and others. It focused mostly on the latter for its first 200 years and only re-committed itself to its charter in 1968 and began recruiting Native American students to attend the college.

On campus at the time were 53 Native American high school seniors, prospective students who had been flown to Hanover, New Hampshire from across the country to check out the college. Due to programs like these to retain and graduate Native students, Dartmouth has more Native American alumni than all other Ivy League schools combined.



Native students at Dartmouth College made a number of signs to protest Columbus Day and celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day. (Native Americans at Dartmouth/Facebook/Kohar Avakian)

Dahkota Kicking Bear Brown, a national youth leader on the mascot issue was on campus as a "fly-in" (prospective Native student) and celebrated Indigenous Peoples' Day with the other Native students. He told Indian Country Today Media Network:

"We sang-in indigenous day well past midnight and it quickly felt like we were part of the campus rather than visitors. Monday brought more adventure in the life of being a college student. We gathered and prepared signs to celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day: 'We are Still HERE' 'Celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day!' The derogatory fliers appeared late Monday night, in a failed attempt to mock us celebrating IPD by using our own words from the signs we held. All students showed support of the Native community by helping to throw them away quickly. It was a solid sense of unity giving us a great idea of what we could look forward to as students. Administration, alumni and students clearly made it a priority to address it quickly, professionally and made the statement, loud and clear, that the attempt to use any Native mascot would not be tolerated."

Brown notes that this experience actually made him consider attending the college even more.

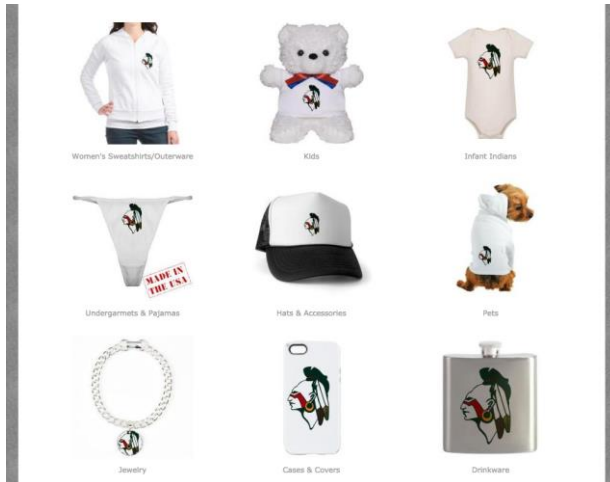


A powerful sign made by Native students at Dartmouth College for Indigenous Peoples' Day. (Native Americans at Dartmouth/Facebook/Kohar Avakian)

CafePress responded to this writer's tweet about the thong and took immediate action—shutting down the entire Occupy Parkhurst store (Parkhurst is one of Dartmouth's administration buildings). [Dartblog](#), an independent blog about the college, speculated that the [Dartmouth Review](#), a conservative student paper affiliated with the National Review, is behind the fliers. As Review students are extremely conservative it is clear the "Occupy Parkhurst" name was meant to be ironic. However, despite the removal of the Occupy Parkhurst store, the Dartmouth Review's [CafePress store](#) is still up and carries the same products that the Occupy Parkhurst store did including the thong, flask and dog clothing with the Indian symbol on it.



Dartmouth Indian Thong



Some of the multitude of items still available in the Dartmouth Review CafePress store.

Surprisingly, the Greek houses gave a very strong denunciation of the fliers. Interfraternity President Sam Macomber issued an email stating: “There are rumors that a fraternity’s new member class is responsible for creating and distributing the poster. I want to share that this is entirely unacceptable and violates IFC bi-laws concerning conduct/respect, hazing, and cultural appropriation... In response to this event, the GLC is proposing an amendment in which any house promoting or prominently displaying the Dartmouth Indian will be ineligible for funding, disassociated from the GLC, and fined. This would apply to any artwork, posters, pong tables, etc. in your houses.”

There is evidence that the fliers have fed a backlash against Native American students on campus. An email from the Student Assembly noted that a Native student had been harassed on campus after the incident.



Two students hold an Indigenous Day sign at Dartmouth College. (Native Americans at Dartmouth/Facebook/Kohar Avakian)

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/10/15/playing-dirty-dartmouth-group-mocks-indigenous-day-native-thong-162088>